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JOE MALENKO! Is Wilder Than Ever! MURAKAMI! Tries to Murder CARL MALENKO! We Have A DAVE MELTZER! Sighting! SCHNEIDER! Surfs The Information Super Highway For Some Wrestling! TENZAN! TONY KOZINA! THE STATE PATROL! and more.....

WELCOME TO DVDVR #127

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We are starting to gear up for 500 time so we are all defensive and shit. The Excuses: Dean got sick and the rest of us got lazy and religious and shit. This time we provide for YOU!, our beloved reader: Rippa finds some more Joe Malenko that wasn't reviewed. Schneider has some Bat-Bat and some US Indies that you haven't watched. Dean knocks off the New Japan PPVs and also falls in love with the wonder that is Candian Indy wrestling while trying to spell Asian Cougar in as many different ways as possible. (Editor's Note - At 5 am, I just decided to pick the dictionary spelling whether it be right or not.) Ray is still obsessed with the ladies and Naimark and Phat Tony each contribute that little something something. Up first - the RIIIPPPERRRR!!!!!!

~!~

All Japan Classics #101 - Samurai TV (July - August 2000)
(by Phil Rippa)

The great story about this tape is that Schneider got it from Scott Mailman like six months ago. Phil gives me the tape and says I have to watch the Joe Malenko match. I get swamped with tapes and forget about it for a while. I suddenly realize that I have unwatched Joe Malenko and pop the tape in. I then freak out over the first match and call Schneider and ask him if he watched this match yet. He responds by saying that this was the same match he told me about six months ago. So in short - Me lose brain. Uh Oh.

On another aside, if I don't get me some sort of Best of Joe tape soon, I will be forced to go on a murderous rampage. I have a list. Well, I will make a list. Fine, I will steal someone's list. Okay, I will contemplate making a list. Don't make me rack my brain.

Dan Kroffat/Doug Furnas vs. Kenta Kobashi/Joe Malenko (10/11/89 - All-Asian Tag Title)
It seemed that Joe Malenko was a perennial All-Asian tag title challenger as he gets the 16-year old Kobashi to help with his quest. (I am huge All-Asian Tag Title freak so I am all about the Joe Malenko quest along with the 7000 other matches that I still need to see.) It is such a shame that injuries cut short Joe's career because he was carving out such a niche for himself in All Japan. Between the All-Asian tag belts and the PWF Jr. Title he was plenty busy and the crowds seemed to dig him - evidenced by the big "MA-LEN-KO!" chants through this match. Malenko is amazingly spunky and Kroffat is amazingly pissed off. This means the two of them waffle each other and Kobashi doesn't mind kicking people in the face. Furnas is mostly in the periphery as he does his dropkick, has the wedgie and does some backflips. Well, to be fair, he isn't utterly worthless as there is one sequence where Joe applies a reverse crippler crossface - which looked as painful as it sounds. Furnas maneuvers his body so he is able to stand up, since Joe refuses to break the hold, Furnas has Malenko hanging solely from his neck. Old Dougie then turns it into an urnanage. Kroffat is the total dickish heel in the match - hitting on the break and spitting on his opponents. Kobashi (who has this amazingly different moveset but it still has lots of "I will shatter my patella with this attempt" too it) is beloved and as previously mentioned, Joe is wildly over too. Of course, when you can do the World's Greatest reversal out of a head scissors, you should be. Have I mentioned how motherfucking great this match is. The pace is unbelievable. There is that beautiful mix of matwork, cool-ass counters, highspots and stiffness that you have to love. A neat ending added plenty. I won't spoil it for you but I will say that Furnas gets to contribute something else to the match. I just saw what appears to be the "rematch" on Lynch's update, which means I know what I am getting next. That and the bizarro Joe Malenko shoot show that everyone says is so common but no one has sent me a copy of yet.

Jumbo Tsuruta vs. Tenryu (10/22/89)
Schneider already reviewed this match so I will keep going. Great match though.

Shoehi Baba/Kenta Kobashi vs. Rusher Kimura/Goro Tsurumi (10/22/89)

Goro has the hair and the mustache and really gives an inspired performance. Unfortunately, there is too much Baba and Kimura selling each other's comically bad chops and punches. Plus, Baba working a knee is not something high on my watch priorities. Dean has some inane theory that 1989 Rusher Kimura was great but I wasn't buying it. Kobashi is the glue that holds this together and prevents things from being a Sid/Cibernetico no-selling farce. Nothing to really concern yourself with. Watch it in fast forward and it will reasonably still be regular speed.

Kenta Kobashi/Joe Malenko vs. Dan Kroffat/Ken Shamrock (10/1/89)

Who knows where Furnas was on this day but he was replaced by the green, Ken Paterasque Ken Shamrock - USA tights, super roided out upper body. More Joe Malenko is fine by me. (JOE MALENKO! SUPLEX MACHINE!) Plenty of cool wrestling but there are some flaws that drag the match down – namely Shamrock. He easily gets lost and is really only good when Joe corrals him into some matwork. Shamrock sure lives up to his color as his blows a bunch of different stuff - like botching the knucklelock bridge (ask tomk about the knucklelock and he will give you a big long diatribe about what is a good knucklelock and what isn't. He will then hip you to some of the most bewildering web sites you never wanted to see.) The worst offense is possibly the ugliest looking Irish Whip preformed in a wrestling ring. The Shamrock moonsault is also something that needs to be seen – more in a NASA Mars landing kinda way as there was no way it was going to turn out well. However, Kroffat was feeling it so the quality of wrestling when he was in was superb. I still await the Malenko/Kroffat blow off singles match. There seemed to be some legit hate between the two in all these matches but to the best of my knowledge the singles match never occurred. Malenko and Kobashi go over as Kobashi pins young Shamrock, which was good in showing that Kroffat's regular partner was the stronger teammate and that young Kenny was the weak link.

GenichiroTenryu/Toshiaki Kawada/Ricky Fuyuki vs. Jumbo Tsuruta/Kabuki/Kenta Kobashi (10/14/89)

There are nine possible combinations that could occur in this match - the one you want to see the least is Kabuki vs. Fuyuki. Naturally, this takes up big blocks of the opening minutes. Isn't there a theory that applies here? Something about those with the biggest gut spend the most time in the ring. I believe the correct term is the Paul Wight Corollary. The one thing I will say is that I would much rather watch the All Japan Kabuki than the World Class Kabuki. The marquee matchup at this time is, obviously, Tenryu/Jumbo. They hook up right at the beginning and then sporadically throughout the match with Jumbo getting all jumping kneeish. He hits something like four on Tenryu even once accidentally hotshotting himself as he does it. Kawada and Kobashi tore into each other back in the day too. Kawada is breaking jaws and raising welts while Kobashi is busting necks and collapsing his own knees. Kabuki is even serviceable when not wrestling Fuyuki. Watching Kawada sell some of the Kabuki offense is downright surreal because I was thinking "I remember when Mike Von Erich had to sell that." Fuck that, Tenryu selling the Kabuki left uppercuts had me rolling with laughter as Tenryu was selling them like Kabuki was hitting him with knuckle dusters. Fuyuki delivers a bunch of leg drops and then gets out of Dodge. The big point of the match is to get over that Kobashi can wrestle with the big guns, especially Tenryu. They bring the pain on each other and Kobashi gets some near falls on

both Tenryu and Kawada but eventually is worn down to the point that he can't withstand the onslaught anymore and is saddled with the pinfall. It was a real good way of elevating Kobashi without having to put him over and it was a different sort of match with Jumbo in the background, not having to do the bulk of the work. This whole tape was all about Kobashi and some of his earlier work.

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BattlARTS 10/1/00
(by Phil Schneider)

Junji.Com vs. Takeshi Ono

Back in the early days of my slavish BattlARTS fanboyism, Takeshi Ono was my favorite wrestler in the whole federation - a skinny surly asskicker who wasn't afraid to sneer contemptuously as he kicked someone square in the face. Then the dark period, he started skipping class, hanging out with dropouts like Orihara and getting into steel chairs and eye makeup. He may have looked cool to the slutty Mobius girls but his wrestling fell off something terrible. Well Orihara got sent to juvi and it looks like Ono is back on the straight and narrow. No hair gel, no bad lucha, just asstomping, and say what you will about Junji.com, but he will get kicked right there in the face for you. This match was pretty fun, as Ono supplied the assbeating and the quirky counters into submissions. Junji didn't do much but he didn't screw much up either which is all you can expect. Some of the boss Ono counters included turning a diving neckbreaker drop into a twisty armbar, spinning from an octopus hold into a kneebar (which .Com countered into a scorpion in the coolest sequence of the match.) The end was great too, as .Com attempts a DVD and Ono spins out in a fluid motion into a cross armbreaker for the tap-out. Ono is back baby and they need to move him back up the card to mix with the big boys

Osamu Tachikari vs. Tsubo Genjin

Long winded diatribes about Osamu as some sort of everyman hero, are really more of Dean's kind of thing. This was a comedy match with and injured Road Warrior Hawk doing comedy spots. Write your own review.

Alvin Ken/Katsumi Usuda vs. Naoki Sano/Noayuki Taria

This was a pretty fun match, which was very mat based and stretchy. Taria and Ken start out and Taria does all of his tricked out quasi-Euro Johnny Saintish matwork. I have no idea where they got Taria from, but he definitely brings the fun. Ken is all spunky which is pretty much his role in the match. When Sano and Usuda get in they have a more traditional shootstyle mat section and it also righteously rocks. Then Ken gets tagged in and Sano stretches the fuck out of him bending him in the way bodies shouldn't be bent. The match goes back and forth like that, with some nice kicking by Usuda and some cool shit by Sano including a swanky tope. This match was fine professional wrestling and especially cool for matwork fans, but it sort of lacked the really hellacious asskicking which really great Bat-Bat matches have. Plus at 22 minutes the match tended to drag, there are only so many times one can see Alvin Ken's fighting spirit

Yuki Ishikawa/Carl Malenko vs. Mitsu Nagai/Katsumi Murakami

Remember those hellacious asskickings I referenced earlier? Well welcome to the world of Katsumi Muramotherfuckingkami. Murakami may be my favorite wrestler to watch in the world right now. He is just such a sneering, cocky fuckwad who seems to really enjoy punching people hard in the face. This is in the midst of his feud with Yuki Ishikawa which was feud of the year in my book, as the brutality of their match ups even trumped Ishikawa vs. Ikeda for pure lack of punch and kick pulling. Carl Malenko is teaming up with Yuki here and holy batshit do they pummel him. Nagai delivers a jumping kick which is about the nastiest thing I have seen for a while. Malenko is one of the best mat wrestlers in the world but he didn't do much except take a beating, but it was a heck of a beating. After Malenko got KO'ed, Murakami and Ishikawa did a pull apart which had a ton of heat as they just started brawling in the crowd and just rocking each other.

Rasta Warrior/Animal vs. Mohammed Yone/Alexander Otsuka

Hey its Animal, he doesn't wrestle so well. Hawk is at ringside recovering from his heart attack (don't do drugs kids), and Rasta Warrior was in the match so Animal wouldn't have to sell anything. Rasta tries some stuff including a tope, and a top rope rana. I understand that Otsuka's hero is the Road Warriors, but golly jeez do they suck and wish they would stay in Australia or on Military Base tours. Damn AOL for canceling WCW and thus placing Animal out of a job and increasing the chance that he might come back and stink up BattlARTS. SCREW YOU JAMIE KELLNER.

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NEW JAPAN PRO WRESTLING PayPerVeiw- 12/10/2000
(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Mailman gave all of us a copy of this mofukka in the parking lot of the Super 8 and it rules it pretty hard- what with the Nagata and Kawada beating the living fuck out of each other and the fun fun fun fun fun fun fun 6 man Junior match. Plus, it will give YOU, the gentle beloved reader, the chance to get even more caught up on the other guys in New Japan that you and I usually don't give three fux about. IT'LL ROCK! I SWORN! The beginning endless stream of interviews is really endless- so endless in fact that I wrote this little introduction while in Outlook Express - Outlook Express sux cock and crashes when I was right about HERE - I keep it running in real time and I have time to rewrite this whole thing, steal the matchlist from Five Star Grappling Films (or whatever he calls it), fix it so you can't tell I stole it (YEAH BABY!) AND still have time to find the most annoying background/ font/text color combination in all of Netscape Composerville to irritate new DVDVR editing poobah Phil Rippa when he has to make sense of this motherfucker and, well I'll be damned, MANABU NAKANISHI IS STILL MOTHERFUCKING TALKING ! AWRIGHT! They talk to Yamazaki while I write a little thing about my long lasting, stern-yet-loving relationship with Junji Hirata.

Super Strong Machine/Kensuke Sasaki vs. T-2000 Machine/Masa Chono:

Super Strong Machine is Junji Hirata, a wrestler who has not entered my conscious thought since the tag team he had with Shinya Hashimoto broke up. It was a tag team that did generate enough goodwill in my heart for me to be a little torqued about seeing him again- after all these years. Junji Hirata was always the role model of WAR heavyweights the world over - in his staunch position of never having to be glamorous or exciting to be employed forever - as he works stiff, doesn't suck in his gut and could really just give a fuck about the look on your face when you see his perm. And you gotta look up to him for that. T-2000 Machine is Nise Sting from the old days of the WCW and I haven't actually seen him wrestle since the halcyon days of when I used to go out of my way to say that HE WAS THE GOOD STING! BECAUSE THE REAL STING SUCKS! THAT'S RIGHT, THE FAKE STING! HE'S BETTER! We'll see how he held up. It'll be exciting, like a class reunion of sorts. Sasaki is on a gigantic roll, having good to great matches in the usual (Kawada) and unusuallest (Kojima) places. Chono's a wreck and you know the drill. Chono starts off by cheating like a total aging shitkicking asshole - getting the advantage on Kensuke and working the arm all to set up the Yakuza Kick to set up the Power Slam to the fullest effect. Chono is thoroughly man-sized in his breaking up of a kneebar by grabbing Kensuke's fingers by the twos and pulling them apart like Gloria Stivak in All In The Family. Hey! Nise Sting is off the gas and on the chicken fingers. He and SSM go at it like Killer Karl Kox and Porkchops Cash on the mat and I'm baffled. Chono comes in and works the leg and the cheating really kicks in- what with the double teams and eye-gouging. They both work on Sasaki's leg a while with assorted kneebars and extended Indian Deathlocks that woulda got you the belt in 1978. Kensuke Morton gets a BURST and makes the hot tag to your boy Junji and it goes to the floor so Chono can be all dastardly and get the drop on SSM. Hirata gets the double lariat and uses HIS hot tag - with Sasaki still selling the leg! In the first match! What The Fuck?! Maybe Sasaki is lovable after all. SSM wants only ONE MACHINE but gets fouled for his attempted demaskation. Chono and Sasaki then reenact the finish of their IWGP match but partners make the save. Chono kicks Hirata in the lil super strong machines and gets the STF. Hirata gets kicked in the face a lot but fights out of a German to do a SUPER COOL ASS Hammerlock Capture Suplex WITH a Bridge for 2. Kensuke CRUSHES him with a lariat and Hirata hits a thoroughly GNARLY diving headbutt for the win. Okay, Hirata kicks ass. Nise Sting is still the better Sting. A fine fine heavyweight New Japan tag match because the last three minutes were pretty beautiful in it's crushiness.

Yutaka Yoshie vs Hiroyoshi Tenzan:

Well, it's Yoshie. I haven't seen him since I saw him on the Samurai TV New Japan undercard show where he had a two star match with Chris Jericho. Tenzan now has the coolest coat in the world. The black... duckheads (maybe) on the shoulder just does beat out the shiny pair of scissors of the EMLL barber. HEY! Yoshie has the worst haircut I've ever seen - as if someone threw a hair-banana peel at him and it stuck to the back of his head. Tenzan does the full repertoire of Tony Atlas chops. Yoshie is quite the poorman's Abdullah Kobayashi, Jr without the suplexes. He is quite the Moondog Yutaka wannabe. He is the Lost Third Freedom Dog! They trade Tony Atlas chops. Actually, his hair looks a lot like a starfish on top of his head. The upside of this match is that Yoshie's hair makes you forget all about Tenzan's preposterous hairstyle. After a bad looking reverse figure four, Yoshie does hit a Released German that Tenzan takes right on the base of his spine for my viewing pleasure. Yoshie hits SOMETHING

and goes into the Reverse Figure Four again. Then the New Japan battle of the Lariats!!!! Tenzan gets the advantage with a Running Tony Atlas Two Finger Chop! HOT ACTION! Oh wai... Tenzan hits an actually nice looking diving headbutt. Yoshie ducks the Moonsault and hits a German with a Bridge! Then back to the Reverse Figure Four and TENZAN TAPS! TENZAN TAPS! TENZAN MUSTA BEEN HUMPIN' ON RIKI CHOSYU'S WIFE! I can see it now...

CHOSYU: Okay, just kill a few minutes with basic easy power stuff and try to make sure he doesn't screw any thing up like...

TENZAN: You mean like when I screw your WIFE! And she gives me THE PLEASURE OF HER LOVE!!! THE PLEASURE OF HER BODY!!! IS THAT WHAT YOU MEAN?!?!?

CHOSYU: What the fuck are you tal....

TENZAN: OLD MAN! Only I can give her the attention needed to bring out the savage lover trapped inside of her- a lover that you can NEVER bring out! ONLY I!!!, her strapping young angel man, can do that- make her FEEL ALIVE AGAIN! Go book your wrestling card, OLD MAN! We've got LOVE to make!! WE'VE GOT HISTORY TO MAKE!! HER LOVE IS MY SOUL AND IT IS ALL I NEED to be ALIVE!

CHOSYU: Actually, I've just now decided to elevate Yoshie. Put him over in 8 minutes.

TENZAN: I don't care- HOW COULD I CARE?!?!? I'm in LOVE! IN LOVE! WITH RIKI CHOSYU'S WIFE!!

The good: Yoshie's hair. The Released German. Then you had the rest.

Michiyoshi Ohara vs. Kendo Ka Shin:

Ah, poor Ishizawa. First he takes a good mask and tries to use it get over a Locomotion Snapmare as being sexy in a "shooty/ Lucha-mounts-BattlARTS/ wacky approximation of Benoit" kind of way. And then Halph, Holando or Hyan Gracie beats the living fuck out of him in Pride. Kendo Ka Shin's luck has turned to Kendo Ka Shit as he must now enter the ring with the correctly-nippled Harris Brother of New Japan - Michiyoshi Ohara, who doesn't even have the DECENCY to be a fucking Freedom Dog anymore and still expects me to give a shit about his sub-Kishin Kawabata-level Indie Japanese Heavyweight In Leopard Tights wrestling stylings. Yoshie and Ohara look an awful lot alike and my theory is they are the bastard sons of Riki Choshyu - thus explaining each's career. As for the horrendous match at hand - neither of these guys are great shakes but they could have done better than this. Three minutes in and Ohara wins with a chokeslam while Kendo was slapping the ref around. This match really sucked shit.

Satoshi Kojima vs. Kenzo Suzuki:

Kenzo Suzuki is the big Rugby star they signed. Kojima is a good, suddenly hidden worker in New Japan. Kenzo Suzuki is lanky and buff - a future young Jeremy Soria favorite Japanese wrestler I would venture to say. Very basic match where Kojima tries to cover up for Suzuki's greenness by killing time and trying to set Suzuki's Big Spear - which he does about five times. Suzuki will probably be good at some point, but not yet. Kojima with a lariat finishes this highly forgettable but unobjectionable batch of wrestling.

Minoru Tanaka/Shin'ya Makabe/Jyushin Thunder Lyger vs. Tsubasa/Murahama/Super Delfin: Murahama is the pocket-shooter from Osaka Pro and BOY! is he tiny. This was pretty fucking good - as Super Delfin is eternally overlooked these days, despite the fact that he is still a really good worker. Makabe is the one of these six that I've noticed in this match and the completely BOSS match with Lyger vs Minoru Tanaka and Kanemoto on the ESPN-Japan special as being one of the most improved wrestlers of the last year. Murahama wants a piece of Minoru's fat ass and Murahama- three feet tall and Rainbow Tights Bedecked- goes all kicktastic with the aaawwwwwwwwwweeeesssssssoooooommmmmme Minoru Tanaka, getting the advantage into a kneelock that Minoru counters and until they stalemate - then they start kicking the fuck outta each other and I'm in love all over again. And Minoru drops a knee across Murahama's punk ass face and says, "Delfin! I want a piece of your FAT ASS!" Minoru says, "PSYCHE!" and tags in Makabe and Delfin takes the advantage through dropkicks until Makabe hits a Spear (Jayzeus, what are these guys watchin?) Tsubasa tags and hits the street as MINORU KICKS HIM RIGHT IN THE MOTHERFUCKING HEAD! WOO-HOO! Lyger then beats the fudge outta Tsubasa until Tsubasa does a super lowgrade headscissors for a brief respite. Minoru tags in hits a quite average dropkick until Delfin comes for a sec and they feign some weak triple teams on Minoru and they keep getting in each others way and it's kinda crappy at this point - as Osaka Pro on offense in so not as cool as Minoru on offense. Until Murahama hits a GNARLY palm thrust, ripping Minoru's head off and launching it into the fourth row. Minoru counters out of the corner with second rope running reverse dropkick and suddenly Lyger is in the Octopus Hold and Minoru and Makabe are Larry and Curley. Osaka Pro United hits the DYNAMIC triple dropkick on Lyger to signal the Highspot Train and it's fun. Murahama wins with the Tope Con Hilo of Heck, while Tsubasa is so very Hayato-esque in his super non-Bigtime looking high flying. Murahama works on Lyger's arm for kicks, doing the cool ass Judo throw into a Key Lock into a Cross-Armbreaker. Hey, I'm starting to dig this lil pipsqueak. Lyger counters out with a HIGH ANGLE POWERBOMB and Murahama has a tiny neck so the bouncing off the mat is lost to the crowd. Makabe and Delfin mix it up- with Makabe hitting his cool power arsenal- powerslam into a BEAUTIFUL German With a Bridge. Delfin hits his totally 1996 Swinging DDT to get it to Minoru vs Hanzo Nakajima 2001- Tsubasa. Minoru does the COOLEST move of the match where he does this big attempt at a spinning heel kick but Tsubasa ducks but Minoru adjusts his spin and lands on his feet. OH MAN! It is soooo BOSS. Minoru hits the Rolling Kneebar but Delfin makes the save. Tsubasa then hits four consecutive lowgrade highspots and one HORRENDOUS looking 450 Splash. BOY! Tsubasa saves his bacon by taking a dropkick counter off the top rope like a young living Brian Pillman. And then takes the Blind Missile Dropkick by Minoru like a MAN. One Minoru Special (the Northern Lights Suplex Floatover into a Crossarmbreaker) and Tsubasa is beaten into my heart again. Fine little match. I dig Murahama a lot. I tried to resist the Minoru Bandwagoning, but fuck it, he just fucking rules the whole goddamned world at this point.

Manabu Nakanishi vs. Osamu Nishimura:

You gotta love Nishimura. He disappeared from New Japan after an inexplicably big push- which included a quite watchable match against a suck-ass era Kensuke Sasaki during Kensuke's first title run. The rumors were that he left Japan for big kisses and hot lovin' from his laaaaady in Germany, while New Japan said he had some sort of stomach problem. Either

way, here he is against the former Kurosawa of the late WCW, and one can only think that Nakanishi- while backstage at a WCW Saturday Night taping- got one look of Dave Sullivan on the monitor and said to himself, "One day I'll will wrestle like the number one Hulkamaniac." I can proudly say today that a young man from Japan has- finally- reached his dream.... The big lanky Texan Nakanishi towers over the mousy Nishimura and is twice as wide, but a Cravat by Nishimura brings Nakanishi down to size. Nishimura gets into a knucklelock and loses BIG! but gets all Bridgetastic to make it all fun as he works Nakanishi off his vertical base and procures the headlock. Nakanishi is so very Sid Eudy-like in his application of the crappy Bow and Arrow Manuever but Nishimura kicks him in the stomach with both feet so it all works out in the end. Manabu looks better applying the half crab but it gets all kooky when he TRANSFORMS it into an Iron Claw. HEY! Follow THIS! It goes: Half crab to kneebar attempt counter to IRON CLAW to Headscissors Reversal into an attempted Cross-Armbreaker into a Keel Lock into the Power Out Of The Keylock Body Slam. Talk about Post-modern combo style Mishmashia. Nakanishi lumbers over and kicks Osamu a bunch and Osamu hits the street. Osamu kicks his way out of another Knucklelock losing situation and grabs a Toe Hold. After Manabu makes the ropes, they start beating on each other and Manabu beats him down. A High Knee leads up to an Argentine Backbreaker attempt that Osamu turns into a fine fine Octopus hold. Nishimura RELEASES and hits a fat ass Missile Dropkick and goes for another Octopus and starts kicking. MANABU WIGGLES HIS ARM! Yes...he's WIGGLING HIS ARMS! HIS ARMS ARE WIGGLING! He then hits a SPEAR- as the Spear has replaced Lariat as the most overused move in New Japan. Since it wasn't Goldbergian enough, Osamu fights out of the Argentine Backbreaker attempt and sinks in a Sleeper hold. Manabu eventually flips him out but can do nothing effectively as Osamu hits a Dragon Screw. Finally, Manabu just kinda grabs Osamu as Osamu is trying to go for another Dragon Screw and puts him in an Argentine Backbreaker for the win. QUESTIONS... yes questions..... Why the arm wiggling? Why the comical offhand ending? Why does Manabu Nakanishi emulate every big stiff he ever saw on TV as a kid in Osaka? Why the Iron Claw? Is it a tribute to Baron Von Raschke? Did they show AWA reruns every day at 4:30 on ESPN Japan in the mid-80s? Am I wrong or is Osamu Nishimura achieving a Koshinaka-level of resembling Sam Waterston? Despite these queries, after it's all said and done, you can say- yes- I watched a mid-card heavyweight match between an inconsistent and directionless quasi-Junior Heavyweight and a big stiff who really stinks in the ring. Yes. Yes you can. And I can too. Yes.

Tatsumi Fujinami vs. Koji Kanemoto:

AHAHAHAHAHAHA! Ah New Japan, you KILL me! Koji starts all dropkickin' and Moooooonsaultin'. Sho nuff, Tatsumi gets out the ring. Kohji avoids the Dragon Suplex and says, "FEEL IT OLD MAN! FEEL THE FURY OF MY SNAP MARE, MOTHERFUCKER!" Tatsumi Fujinami says, "HA! FEEL THE POWER OF MY HEADLOCK!" Kohji kicks Grampa in the face really hard and then knees him really hard in the face so this is approaching a kinda fun level. Fujinami says (to himself), "If I get him in an armbar and a chinlock, he will no longer be kicking me in the brittle bones of my face." Koji feigns a Cross Armbreaker but decides to just start punching him in the face before the infamous Kneebar to Nowhere kicks in. They run around a bit and Koji kicks Tatsumi in the front of the thigh and puts on a kneebar and kicks and kicks and kicks until the Dragon Screw rears it's head. Tatsumi misses the Inoki Outdated

Toprope Legdrop and I await an Airplane Spin submission soon. They smack each until Tatsumi feigns a TOPE! Koji ducks, Tatsumi stops at the apron, and Koji wrangles it to the point of hitting his own Tope- jerking his neck in an impossible direction upon impact, and then they kinda go into a kneebar again. Tatsumi Fujinami- who has been wrestling so long that he once beat Teddy Roosevelt with a Sunset Flip- fux up a Missed Moonsault spot. What the fuck? Koji Kanemoto is broken in half with a backbreaker and then becomes the first man of the new millenium to submit to a Figure Four Leglock. God, Fujinami is becoming as annoying as Fujiwara as the duel Grampa Simpsons of Japanese Wrestling. I mean fuck, Fuckin KABUKI had the sense to quit before he became any more of a pathetic geezer.

Yuji Nagata/Takashi Iizuka vs. Toshiaki Kawada/Masa Fuchi:

Fuck the Nagata Beats Kawada Beats Nagata To Death dynamic for a moment and take a look at why this match is soooooo motherfucking great- Iizuka is just fucking balls to the motherfucking wall in this and Masa Fuchi is COMPLETELY balls to the Motherfucking wall in this. There is a parallel story in this match with Fuchi and Iizuka. Fuchi is fucking kingsize in this, taking up huge sections of time through oldest of Old School techniques of psychology to position himself and his partner in the mind of the fans- KAWADA and FUCHI are bastards and ass-beaters who stayed loyal to Baba and are here to save their promotion by beating the fuck out of the New Japan Johnny-Come-Latelys. Fuchi does the coolest worked shoot of KNOWING that in the mind of the crowd he was a man regulated to comedy matches to make room for the young guys and NOW he has to pick up his gun and go to war against the young punks to save everything he worked his whole professional life to help create- so the crowd is fucking NUCLEAR when Fuchi shows his SOUL and fights like an absolute motherfucker in this. THAT is the key to why this is a great motherfucking match. Kawada vs Nagata is the gravy on top. You knew that would be good and it is everything one could hope for and then they take the match to a special place- a face-kicking, wonderful, magic place. But in the beginning, Fuchi is a complete dick- doing a Memphis stall and bringing an Older than Old School assault of Iizuka's joints. Nagata comes in and starts kicking the fudge out of Fuchi's spindly thighs, pissing off Kawada to no end. Foreshadowing of hatred becomes REALIZATION of hatred as Fuchi tags out and Kawada and Nagata start just haul off and... take it to the mat. Finally, Nagata kicks him straight in the face and the ass-beating begins. It gets kinda like Sasaki vs. Kawada as they both just stand there and legit beat the living hell out of each other, until Kawada gets the slight advantage and opts to hit a Coffin Corner upside Yuji's cheek. Nagata gets the desperation high kick and they both tag out. Fuchi starts unfolding his corner of the story as he has to get himself over as some sort of threat after years of comedy matches and inconsequential undercard matches. He does this by cheating like a motherfucker and it is absolutely top drawer. After getting the advantage on Iizuka through stealth guile and illegal use of the ropes, Kawada is tagged in to break Iizuka's leg into kindling- taking an odd lucha turn with a Romero Special while Fuchi- the crankiest old bastard in Japan at the moment- steps on Iizuka's throat, all the while making a face that sez, "Hey, New Japan audience, why don't you suck my dick." Fuchi and Kawada Arn and Tully Iizuka in the corner until Nagata comes in with quite the forceful save that feeds to the undercurrent of hate that Kawada and Nagata have projected perfectly to the audience and we the veiwers at home. Kawada comes in to aid his elder partner and starts beating the living dogpiss out of Nagata, all the while Fuchi is GIVING

IIZUKA THE BUSINESS by choking him through the ropes with his foot across the throat. Kawada tags in and the ass-beating is picked up where Fuchi left off as Kawada crushes Iizuka's face with a kneedrop. Iizuka rocks Fuchi's world with his stiff forearm shots. Kawada and Fuchi doubleteam Iizuka after Iizuka gets an advantage, so Iizuka is kicked in the face in the corner a whole bunch and man-o-man IT'S FUN! Fuchi kicks him in the face a while-inbetween making the "C'mon Pussy!" gesture with his arms. Then he stands directly on Iizuka's face and the love is COMPLETE. Fuchi hits him with a vertical suplex for two. Fuchi is an Old School wrestling machine at this point as Iizuka powers out of his flurry to hit a Snap Suplex. Iizuka sinks in a sleeper but Kawada just starts kicking Iizuka until he releases it and Iizuka finally makes the hot tag and he and Kawada are THOROUGHLY pissed off at each other so they start beating the HOLY LIVING FUCK out of each other and the crowd goes fucking apeshit. Kawada takes a brunt of the ass-stomping but counterkicks effectively to get the Stretch Plum procured. The second time he wrenches it in, Kawada hocks a loogie between the teeth he has left in the front- like a biker mama chewing Skoal. Iizuka makes the save, but Kawada just PUNTS THE LIVING FUCK out of Nagata's face to set up his powerbomb. The distraction of Iizuka needing to be kicked in the face allows Nagata to power out and Namath the hell out of Kawada's knee to set up his saluting Nagata Lock that Fuchi breaks up by thumbing Nagata in the eye- as Fuchi is sky-rocketing up my persoanl top ten. Iizuka sez, "Enough Mr. Face In Peril, it's time to be DICKTASTIC!" and starts wailing away on Kawada's knee to set up a kneebars. Kawada makes the break but he is selling the knee like Toshiaki Theisman and Iizuka uses the lifeless corpse of Kawada to springboard off of as he elbows Fuchi right in the face to drive him off the apron. We then get double submissions holds by Nagata and Iizuka, with the legal man Iizuka ripping up Kawada's knee. Kawada hits a superhurty desperation Spin Kick to make the desperation tag to the phoenix that is called Fuchi. Fuchi is still selling the Nagata Lock but hits a BEAUTIFUL dropkick on the knee of Izuuka that he follows up with a Backdrop for two and goes straight into a Front Facelock and we have deulling Submission holds as Fuchi has the Front Facelock on Iizuka while Kawada is stretching Nagata completely plumb. Iizuka fights out of a Vertical Suplex and they tag out as Nagata and Kawada go into Hyper-Visual Going Broadway Mega-kinetic Ass-stomp mode for qa full two minutes before the bell rings and the draw is declared. This match is SO great for so many reasons. Fuchi establishes himself as a haggard aging wrestler who can still bring it from deep inside when his company needs him- and since he and Kawada were the only two remaining after Misawa and company deserted Baba's widow, it has the whole pathos of something desperate and immediate and INTENSE. This match also has Izuuka assuming the role of elevated wrestler who is given a second chance and makes good by being the best possible Ricky Morton ever in this Rock and Roll Express vs Tully and Arn to the nth degree- but the STORY of Fuchi in this adds a depth to the story that you can't get very often at all. It makes me wonder how Chigusa didn't have Devil Masami have a JWP invasion angle with the same dynamic, because it's the same idea - it's both people who worked to establish a promotion that is quickly going to be gone with the wind, and there is a coolness to how they both fight like aged motherfuckers to preserve what they spent their youth to create. Great motherfucking match.

Ultimate Fighting Championship XVIII – 01/10/1999

(by Mike Motherfucking Naimark)

The year was 1999 – Bill Clinton's genitals were still front-page news, the New York Yankees were cornering the market on championship ring polish, and Prince finally learned what it was really like to party like it was 1999 on a daily basis. A young scientist fruitlessly churned out research data in Memphis and wondered if there would ever be any escape from his Elvis-soaked hell. And the mixed bag that was the world of North American martial arts continued to soldier on despite the crushing oppression of politically motivated ignoramuses and their lackeys at cable providers nationwide. UFC 18 continued the evolution of the UFC from a collection of one-dimensional neophytes vainly trying to remember countermoves they'd read in magazines and seen in movies to a field of legitimate, well-conditioned professional fighters. The good news is that we were no longer subjected to the SAFTAs and JoSonDos of the martial arts basements. The Bad news was no more Paul Varelans, either.

But save your tears for Big Paul; at least he'll be featured prominently in Missy Hyatt's new book. Let's head down to the Octagon, and meet the men responsible for tonight's official duties! Our three judges in attendance have brought a wide spectrum of MMA knowledge to the judge's table. Look, there's Eddie Goldman, host of the popular 'No-Holds-Barred' show on Eyada! And here's Tim Catalfo, an MMA trainer and competitor himself, Tim trains the Obaque team in Atlanta, and has rolled with none other than Goldberg on occasion! And why is this shadowy figure slouched at the far end of the judge's table? No, it couldn't be! It is! 'The Meltz', Dave Meltzer, who I understand writes for some online site somewhere. Wrestleline? No, he's too thin. PWTorch? Nah, he's too erudite. 1wrestling.com? Nope, that joke would be too easy! Well, I'm sure I'll remember his affiliation soon enough, but I'm going to be keeping my eye on you, bub.

Darrell Gholar (5'8 194lb age 35) vs. Evan Tanner (6' 199lb age 27)

We begin with a pair of rising middleweights. Gholar, a stocky fella who vaguely resembles what I think Mr. T would look like without a Mohawk, is a 2-time nation Greco-Roman wrestling champion, and Jeff Blatnick uncharacteristically offers some legitimate insight by stating that he's seen Gholar compete in Greco-Roman before, and that his stamina has always been his biggest question mark. Neither of these guys have much to offer in the way of excess body fat. The match begins with some hesitant circling, and Gholar tries ever-so-hard to look like a boxer on his feet. In fact, both men try a little of the sweet science in the opening minute, and it's a pretty sad spectacle all the way around. Finally Gholar catches a Tanner whip-kick to the leg and sweeps the other leg to land firmly in the guard. From here Tanner immediately tries a triangle choke, which is always a smart move when you've got a pure wrestler in your guard. Gholar briefly panics and, in an astounding feat of strength, rises up and lifts Tanner chest-high, essentially with one arm, and sends Tanner crashing to the mat with a powerbomb – a legitimate powerbomb, probably **** on the Benoit scale. I'm sure if Kevin Nash were watching this somewhere through his "Mister Beer"-addled haze, he'd think that he'd seen this move before, even if he couldn't recall where. Back to the Octagon, Tanner is still locked on Gholar's arm and goes right back to working the triangle from his back. Gholar is visibly confused and goes for another powerbomb/lift, but this time doesn't try and overpower Tanner. Gholar ends

up with a side-mount, but Tanner quickly escorts him into the guard. For about 3 minutes, Gholar displays his total lack of a gameplan and the fight stalls to a crawl. Finally, Tanner slips out the back door and regains his feet, locking on a Muay-thai neck vice and stunning Gholar with a strong kneestrike to the body, followed by one to the head. Gholar reels back and actually turns his back on Tanner and jogs to a safer distance, never a promising sign. Gholar looks visibly winded and Tanner presses the assault, landing repeated whip-kicks to Gholar's lead leg and forcing the wrestler back against the Octagon cage. Tanner grabs the neck once again and launches a flurry of powerful Muay-thai style infighting, landing strong kneestrikes to the body and a few oblique elbow strikes for good measure. Gholar is taking serious damage and can barely keep his hands above waist level and Tanner continues his kneestrike assault, bringing one up between Gholar's arms and crashing into his chin. Again Gholar turns his back on Tanner, but this time Tanner presses his advantage and immediately grabs a standing rear-naked choke. He pulls Gholar to the ground, and Gholar taps out just shy of the 8-minute mark. Jeff Blatnick actually looked prescient by detailing Gholar's history of stamina questions before Gholar went out and starting stepping on his own tongue four minutes into the match. Blatnick with the MMA prophecy? Somebody hold me, I'm so very scared.

Winner by tap-out, EVAN TANNER!

Jerry Bohlander (5'11 199lb) vs. Tito Ortiz (6'2 199lb)

One thing sadly missing from the more recent UFC events is that wonderful staple of earlier shows, the loudmouth chest-thumping promo. The growing professionalism of the newer UFC entrants made the bombast of former UFC punching bags like Joe Son, Greg Stott, and Jon Hess only a quaint memory. So it warmed my heart to hear the Shamrock-trained Jerry Bohlander on 'the stick' before this match. "He's a one-dimensional fighter. Nothing he can do that I can't counter...I'm going in there with a win already." Maybe you are, Jerry, but let's go ahead and have the match anyways, ok? Tito looks noticeably smaller here than he did for his most recent fight in UFC30, so he still apparently had a lot to learn about the fine art of gaining 20lbs in the 24 hours after weigh-in. Ortiz opens with a winging right cross that Bohlander easily avoids before grabbing a waistlock and tumbling to the mat. Bohlander takes guard as Ortiz tries to creep his way over to the fence and restrict Jerry's mobility from the bottom. Bohlander tries to keep Ortiz off-balance with attempts at an armbar from his back, but has no luck. Ortiz tries a little classic 'ground-n-pound' but few of his punches connect with any authority. Somewhere, Mark Coleman is smiling. Oh wait, there he is right there, waiting for his match later tonight. Smile, Mark! Ortiz continues his g-n-p assault, raising up on his toes for greater power and allowing Bohlander to slip out from under him, but Tito calmly grabs a front headlock. Bohlander gets to his feet but is immediately rocked by a series of punches from the aggressive Ortiz. Bohlander backpeddles vigorously as Ortiz presses his assault, mixing up hooks, straight punches, and uppercuts and keeping Bohlander, who suddenly appears to have lost 2 inches and 20lbs since the introductions, off-balance. Ortiz plows in and sweeps the legs to take the fight back to the ground, and Bohlander immediately goes for another armbar but is again denied by Tito's powerful defense. Bohlander shows some skilled defensive abilities of his own by thwarting Ortiz's assault until, with five minutes gone in the fight, the referee returns the fighters to their feet for a restart. Ortiz almost flies out of his corner on the restart and

flurries, but Bohlander successfully backs away and avoids any damage, even landing a leg kick of his own in the exchange. The two men circle and Ortiz launches a strong overhand right that connects with Bohlander's temple, initiating another flurry of punches from Tito that once again puts Bohlander on the defensive. Ortiz with another takedown, and Bohlander finds himself in the unenviable '69' position with Ortiz throwing kneestrikes at his exposed head. Knees to the head of a downed fighter? Some people think this is barbaric, but of course, they're wrong, and I'm sure I'll have more to say on this later. Bohlander rolls over and regains his footing with Ortiz in hot pursuit of another takedown, which he gets in short order and throws a few punches from Bohlander's guard before Jerry's defense slows things down enough to warrant a restart at the 10 minute mark. On the restart, Ortiz quickly gets another waistlock takedown, but can do little before the time expires to end this 12-minute round. After hyperventilating for a minute, the overtime is underway and both men begin by missing punches early. Bohlander ducks under an Ortiz right but still gets grabbed and taken down. Ortiz tries some offense from the guard, but only lands one strike of significance – a short elbow to the brow. When Referee 'Big John' stands the fighters up a minute later, however, we can see that this one strike has opened up a nasty gash near Bohlander's left eye. As the doctor checks on the wound, Ortiz stalks around the ring with a maniacal grin on his face. When the doctor stops the fight just moments later, Ortiz dons his new t-shirt. The front reads, "Extreme Associates 3:16"; the back, "I Just F*@ked Your Ass". In a recent edition of the magazine, "The Grappler", Ortiz, who was featured on the cover, blamed his early association with Tank Abbott for his reputation as a jerk. Hey Tito, I'm pretty sure Tank couldn't even wear that t-shirt as a necklace.

Winner via doctor's stoppage at 2:25 in overtime, TITO ORTIZ!

Mark Coleman (6'1 235) vs. Pedro Rizzo (6'1 228)

Well, well, well, if it isn't Mark Coleman, the man with 101 excuses and no neck. I kid Coleman only because his early dominance was concurrent with his braggadocio and bombastic proclamations, such as "I'm gonna take him to the ground and beat the shit out of him", prior to his classic match against Maurice Smith at UFC15. After his thrilling loss to Smith and his brutal knockout at the shins of Pete Williams, Coleman is looking to get back on track here against the top student of Vale Tudo legend Marco Ruas. The differences between these two men couldn't be more striking; Coleman, the thickly muscled wrestler who can only ground-n-pound, and Rizzo, the physically unimpressive Muay Thai kickboxer who has groundfighting skills which he displays only reluctantly. Coleman immediately shoots for the double-leg takedown, which has been his bread-n-butter since he entered the UFC, but Rizzo easily sprawls to thwart the attempt. But as Rizzo regains his feet, Coleman stays on his knees after the failed shoot and manages to drag Rizzo to the ground by his ankle! Coleman ends up the guard and, having successfully grounded, begins pounding. Rizzo avoids most of the punches, but Coleman's elbows are having more effect and doing most of the damage. Coleman repeatedly tries to wedge Rizzo against the fence and trap him, but Rizzo beats him to the punch every time and spins to the middle of the ring by pushing off the chain link with his bare feet. At the 5-minute mark, 'Big John' stands the fighters up and Coleman is already visibly winded. Where have we seen this before? Oh yeah, in every Mark Coleman match that goes five minutes. Coleman tries to play the boxer, even landing a wild left hand on Rizzo and following up with an even

more awkward right cross which probably hurt even if both punches had no snap and looked like something you'd see happening between two Canadian hockey players with names like 'Jean Luc Fruitier'. Rizzo counters with a brutal whip kick to Coleman's left leg, and both men have a brief flurry in the center of the ring, with Rizzo emerging with a small cut just above his left eye. Both men back off and meet again in the middle of the Octagon, with Coleman attempting and missing another double leg. Rizzo lands another strong leg kick, but Coleman grabs his ankle and tumbles into the half-guard. Rizzo turns on the defensive prowess here and totally thwarts Coleman's ground-n-pound, tying up punches and making Coleman expend even more precious energy on minimal results. At 10:30 in the opening round, 'Big John' orders another stand-up. Rizzo lands a pair of mediocre jabs and another good leg kick as the opening round comes to a close. Prior to the overtime, an exhausted Coleman sports an angry-looking bruise that stretches almost from kneecap to hip on his left leg, the result of Rizzo's Muay Thai pounding. The overtime provides little action, as Coleman appear too tired to do anything explosive and Rizzo too tentative to finish him off, an eerie replay of Coleman vs. Smith. In a show of desperation, Coleman even throws a whip kick of his own, which for some reason makes me recall Joe Son's K-1 debut. The overtime ends with neither man asserting his dominance in the fight, and so we go to the judges. Judge Eddie Goldman scores the fight for Rizzo! Judge Tim Catalfo scores the fight for Coleman! And it all comes down the 'The Meltz'! The pressure is on and all eyes are on Meltzer – the wrong decision could result in a damaged career for the fighter and a severe ass whipping for Dave! And judge Dave Meltzer rules the match for.....

Your winner by split-decision, PEDRO RIZZO!

Pat Miletech (5'11 169) vs. Jorge Patino (5'10 169)

Your lightweight match for the evening (this card also featured a match between lightweights Mikey Burnett and Townsend Sanders which was omitted from the commercial release due to time constraints. How come Phil Schneider can cram 20 hours of wrestling on one videotape but the UFC can't squeeze in another 15 minutes?). Pat Miletech is a seasoned and experienced fighter who earned his stripes winning regional events across North American before hitting it big in the UFC. Because of his methodical, defensive style, Pat's been labeled as "Vanillatech" due to his lack of flash and aggression. Patino is a BJJ fighter with a cross shaved into the back of his head, which makes him ideal Easter material for your DVDVR. Miletech gets the takedown off the early standing grapple and lands in the guard before quickly deciding he'd rather take the Brazilian on while on his feet. Miletech backs off and Patino regains his feet. Pat lands a mechanical but effective leg kick on the spry Brazilian, and they grapple standing for a few seconds before breaking off and circling. Very little happens for the next several minutes, as Miletech pursues half-heartedly and Patino dances away. Since the fighting becomes listless at this point, I'll mention that Jeff Blatnick thanks the presence of MMA fans on the Internet for the continued existence of the UFC in these most censorious of time. In reply, I'd like to thank Jeff's dentist for giving me something to laugh at during those pre-fight interviews. Please send all threats to Dean Rasmussen and Phil Rippa at deathvalleydriver.com, who edit this venerable online publication, and not to Mike Naimark, which is actually just a collective pen name for a team of 1000 Brazilian monkeys pounding

desperately at 1000 keyboards in a breathless sprint to make deadline. At the 7-minute mark, Miletech finally shoots and grabs a front headlock briefly before Patino escapes and flurries with punches. Miletech clinches from the side and Patino drops forward in a not-quite-perfect Tartarkin roll, allowing Miletech to escape as both men regain their feet. The fight plods along until Patino misses a high round kick at the 12-minute mark, which is the offensive highlight of the fight up until... Patino shoots and lands a takedown on Miletech but decided to back away from Pat's full guard. With Patino on his feet and Miletech on his back in the 'birthing' position, the feisty Brazilian gets a running start and leaps over Pat's upraised legs, stepping forcefully on Miletech's face and drawing a even more forceful reprimand from 'Big John' because, you see, its not nice to kick someone when he's down.

Given the presence of 'The Meltz' on the judging staff, let me just segue clumsily into a brief rant. Following Sakuraba's recent loss to Vanderlei Silva, Dave Meltzer let it be know that he strongly disapproved of PRIDE's new ruling allowing kneestrikes to the heads of downed fighters. In my view, true MMA should aim to have the fewest restrictions of techniques as can be safely allowed, and in my years of viewing, those techniques would be few indeed – biting, eye-gouging, and groin-striking being almost universally banned by most organizations (even those wacky Brazilians, who will allow you to do just about anything else, including chairshots, as you Pentagon Combat viewers can attest) for perfectly obvious reasons, and fish-hooking and small-joint locks being banned by most others for their limited practicality in a sportive setting. After some deliberation on my part, I agreed with the decisions to outlaw head-butting as well, coming to the conclusion that head butts are far more likely to cause a fight-stoppage due to cuts on an otherwise strong fighter than by inflicting any real knockout damage, and I tend to find fights stopped due to cuts on vigorous fighters to be unsatisfying. But on the topic of kicks and knees to downed fighters, I stand firmly aligned with the MMA minimalists who feel this rules unfairly penalize the strikers and favor the grapplers. The most common counter for the double-leg takedown is the sprawl, usually accompanied by the front headlock. Without the allowance of kneestrikes to the head of the shooting fighter, there is no direct retributive consequence to his failed shoot. Meanwhile, the fighter on his back can kick an incoming fighter with impunity and to great effect, as Renzo Gracie and Oleg Tartarov can attest to. Sakuraba himself is widely noted for his dynamic and exciting fighting style which includes leaping head stomps like the one Jorge Patino just got penalized for and which were used to great effect in his now legendary series of matches against the Gracie family. Sakuraba lost to Silva because Silva had a style that matched up very well against him, not because of rules allowing unfairly brutal techniques into the PRIDE ring. Adding such deleterious restrictions to MMA lead us down the slippery slope to such 'Many Holds Barred' promotions as Pancrase and Lumax Cup, and while I admire technical grappling as much as any fan, I want to see fighter work under the most limited restrictions in the assumption that the fewer the restrictions, the more valid the outcome. Repent your sissified ways, Dave, and be redeemed in the glory of MMA combat. We now return you to your UFC 18 match, already in progress....

WHAAA? Its over? Already? Gee, my ranting must've run over the overtime. Rest assured that nothing of significance occurred there, either.

Winner by decision, PAT MILETECH!

Bas Rutten (6'1 211) vs. Tsuyoshi Kosaka (5'11 228)

The winner of this match is slated to fight the winner of the Rizzo vs. Coleman match to determine a new UFC heavyweight champion. You've got to love the international flair of the UFC's heavyweight contenders at this point, with a Brazilian beating an American for the right to face the winner of a fight between a Dutchman and a Japanese fighter. Rutten made his name with a highly successful run in Pancrase, including wins over Frank Shamrock and Maurice Smith, while Kosaka came from the similarly-regulated RINGS promotion in Japan with a reputation as a powerful master grappler. Bas is notorious for his striking skills, coming to Japan essentially as a Muay Thai fighter and learning submissions and grappling along the way. He also bears a striking resemblance to Mr. Clean. Yes, that pun was intended. All complaints must be submitted in writing. Kosaka gained his UFC fame by training Maurice Smith on how to beat Mark Coleman on the ground, and Smith is a vocal presence in TK's corner here tonight. After some early circling, Kosaka shoots for the double leg and is met with a kneestrike for his troubles. Bas backpeddles the charging Kosaka and peppers him with short jabs until TK manages to close the distance and take the fight to the ground. Rutten takes guard and Kosaka throws continuous strikes to the head and body, with Rutten responding from his back sporadically. With Rutten trapped against the fence, Kosaka advances to the side mount and throws a series of brutal looking elbows to Bas' leg, drawing praise from Jeff Blatnick at ringside. Rutten rolls out from the side mount and regains his feet. TK presses the action and is caught with a snap front kick on a shoot but still manages to close the distance and take Rutten to the mat once more. Bas immediately starts throwing punches from his back, and Kosaka responds in kind. This match is a stark contrast to the previous one, as neither man has slacked off their onslaught for even a minute. Kosaka flurries on the ground, throwing more than a dozen punches with most missing but some landing solidly on Bas' clean-shaven head. TK swings to the side mount and immediately catches a knee from Rutten to the head. With the action fast and furious on the ground, 'Big John' the referee inexplicably orders the fighters to stand up. Why? As the men return to their corners for the restart, Big John explains that they must "improve position" to avoid the stand up. But what if you're perfectly happy where you are? Not that I'm questioning his judgment, mind you, especially since Big John McCarthy teaches combat to the LAPD, and their idea of MMA is a dozen officers swarming you with nightsticks, but it seemed to me that both men were working hard and staying active on the ground. Both fighters trade leg kicks on the restart, but there's a clear difference between the swift and brutal kicks of Rutten and the slower, more mechanical kicks of Kosaka. Kosaka shoots the double leg again and takes Rutten to the ground, briefly landing in the mount before Bas gets guard. TK works the body punches from the guard, doubling up on head and body combos despite Rutten's fierce resistance. Both men seem to have opened up small, minor cuts near the inside of the eye and forehead, nothing threatening. At the 9:20 mark, Big John again stands the fighters up, and although there was less action preceding this latest restart than the previous one, it still looked unwarranted in my book. On the restart, Rutten throws an absolutely exquisite whip kick, catching Kosaka on the inside of his right leg and almost taking the leg out from under him with a smack that could be heard throughout the arena. Kosaka hops away and stomps his foot, fearing injury, and Rutten is gentleman enough to cease his assault and even

shakes hands with TK when it appears everything is OK. What were all the critics of the brutality inherent in the human cockfighting called MMA watching this night, one must ask. Is it late enough for Skinamax to be on yet? Both men circle, with Kosaka trying another shoot and getting kicked in the leg for his troubles. Rutten tries to follow-up with a wild round kick to the head which misses by spectacular inches. They circle again, TK landing a leg kick but Rutten countering in kind and following up by bouncing a right hand off TK's skull and dodging Kosaka's shoot just as time expires in the opening round. Almost nonstop action, but the restarts left many viewers scratching their heads in befuddlement. Some more conspiratorial-minded fans grumbled about a dark plot to hand Rutten the match, which I felt was unwarranted slander, but the restarts remained perplexing nonetheless. I'd be curious to find out what the referee had to say on this matter, if he ever commented on it.

Moving on to the overtime, Rutten opens the period with some fairly competent left jabs that clearly threw off Kosaka's timing. Rutten pressed the issue with a combination of straight punches, and Kosaka counters with a powerful overhand right that snapped Bas' shiny head backward. Rutten doesn't take a backwards step, however, and returns with a straight right of his own before Kosaka grabs the neck vice and lands a powerful knee to the body. Just over a minute into the overtime Rutten scores with a lead right cross and tries to follow it up with a kick to the head that Kosaka blocks. After a brief pause, Kosaka shoots for the double-leg, but Rutten had been waiting for this all round and counters with a perfectly timed knee to the head as TK is leaning in. Kosaka staggers to the fence as Rutten launches his legendary offensive onslaught – left and right punches landing brutally on Kosaka's head and face, a knee to the sternum followed by another combination, and Kosaka is reeling from the punishment. He drops to his behind, only to eat a frightening knee to the head by Rutten just moments before the referee can halt the match. Bas Rutten had displayed all the offensive tool that had made him such a dominant fighter in Japan to take Kosaka out of the fight, but the braying regarding the earlier stand-ups continued. In my opinion, TK wouldn't have been able to inflict enough damage to Bas to prevent this outcome at some point in the fight, but I also disagree with the stand-ups as they were implemented here. Even the most casual observer would know that Rutten's striking was of the elite caliber, while Kosaka, despite training extensively with Maurice Smith, would undoubtedly be expected to fall a bit short of Rutten's level here, and thus would focus on working on the ground. Certainly there is no corollary punishment for unaggressive strikers, though maybe there should be. Who wouldn't have found *Severn v Shamrock II* at UFC9 a bit more palpable if someone had prodded these two slugs into each other with sharpened sticks?

But despite the hectoring and second-guessing from many viewers, myself including, this match was an outstanding finish to an otherwise inconsistent card. Tito Ortiz has developed into a dominant fighter in his weight class, while Mark Coleman bounced back from this third straight loss to recapture some of his luster in Japan and be ranked by many as the #1 heavyweight in the world today. And 'The Meltz', of course, went on to run the only online wrestling 'news' site whose content doesn't make me want to retch and host a show on Eyada where the topic of discussion frequently centers on bananas. Hey, I don't make the news, I just write about it.

Matrats.com
(by Phil Schneider)

This is the new venture from Mandalay Sports, who was, at one point, a possible buyer for the late, lamented WCW. The concept is basically to get a bunch of good looking teen boys and have them do some wrestling, hoping to appeal to the lucrative teenage girl and pederast market. The name is horrible. Matrats conjures up the image of over rouged strippers slapping at each other to see which one gets to suck off Chris Chetti, and the superfluous .com is very 1996 and really out of place in the post net crash era. They have a couple of matches up on their website and the project definitely has its positives and negatives.

Nick Nog vs. Peter Wilson vs. Keishi Matsunaga

This is a three-way match and it is worked in a very 1997 Nitro cruiserweight style. Lots of flashy spots, not much selling. You can tell that these guys have spent some time training together as the spots were hit very crisply, and the match seemed to pace pretty well, with it usually being one on one, while a third guy recuperated on the outside. Like a lot of indy workers, there seemed to be a lack of basics in this match, as the punches and kicks were pretty poor and there wasn't an ounce of matwork. Wilson's punches seemed especially weak. It was also pretty hard to differentiate between these guys. Matsunaga had the magenta hair and was Japanese, so he stood out, but the other two were both skinny, pasty blond white kids in black shirts. Matsunaga seemed to be the heel and Wilson seemed to be the face, while I guess Nog was a tweener but they didn't do anything overt to set that up, except for the announcer referring to Wilson as scrappy and Matsunaga not pinning Wilson after a Emerald Erosion. The ring set-up includes platforms outside of the turnbuckles, which are referred to as launch pads - they used those to set up a really swank spot where Wilson huracanranas Matsunaga at the same time as he is being superplexed by Nog. Really cool looking and Matsunaga takes a wicked bump. All three guys had some promise to them, with Wilson having some really nice luchaish spots. The match gets the full worldwide point, but I would have really liked to see some wrestling in my wrestling. Also, all three guys worked the match in street clothes which really made them look like kids doing backyard wrestling. It made it really hard to take anything they were doing seriously. They spent a ton of money on production but they should buy these three guys some tights and boots.

Apocalypse vs. Orion

According to the announcer both of these guys were Hart Dungeon trainees, so they must have been Stampede defectors. They do a couple of interview vignettes before the match to set up the characters. Orion is doing an arrogant surfer gimmick - kind of a mix between early 90's Shawn Michaels and Ray Odyssey. Apocalypse has some sort of street musician gimmick, which is original I guess. Tight shirted nymphets accompany both wrestlers, which adds some steam to the matrats name. This match was more technically solid then the previous spot fest, but not as fun. Orion is wearing tights and he threw some decent strikes, thus, he looks like the most professional of the guys in this fed so far. The match built decently, with a brawling section

leading to some big spots like a second rope DDT by Orion and a superfresh float over northern lights suplex by Apocalypse. Then the nonsense starts in as Apocalypse starts shoving the ref (who was wearing the Shawn Michaels nut hugger ref pants) who responds by smacking him. In response to this, the announcer name drops ECW ref HC-Loc, foreshadowing the overbooking yet to come. Run-ins begin as Keishi Matsunaga and some other guy (possibly Nick Nog, maybe Vince Hall) jump both guys to end the match. A Calgary police officer comes out and handcuffs Apocalypse, apparently for panhandling. Utter nonsense and it pissed all over what was a decent match. This also had the same face vs. heel problems of the first match. Orion was definitely a heel, due to his interview and in-match taunting, but Apocalypse seemed to be a heel too as he tossed his spare change cup at the announcer and seemed to do sort of a heelish interview. Plus, getting punked by a ref isn't a babyface move. Then both guys get jumped by Matsunaga and the other guy, who are also clearly heels. The booking was all fucked basically. I did sort of dig Orion though.

Redneck Rob Rogers vs. Vince Hall

This was easily the best match on the show, Hall is really over as he is the prettiest boy on the roster, although the pre-match promo he cut was kind of heelish, as he was complaining about his dad leaving his family which led to Hall wrestling to get revenge on daddy. Rogers is doing a redneck gimmick and was the biggest bumper on the show, taking a backdrop to the ramp and a top rope powerbomb. He also had some pretty nice powermoves. Hall was really agile, doing some backflips and quick exchanges. They didn't blow anything although their punches kind of sucked. The finish was a top rope powerbomb and a frog splash off of the launch pad. The only booking problem I had with this match was the ref giving a rocker dropper to Redneck Rob Rogers, which just continues the stupid bad ass ref gimmick.

Jack Evans vs. Jake Evans

The bad booking continues as they hotshot the brother tag team break up in the first show. They showed highlights of last week's six-man main event (which wasn't on the website for some reason) which included Jack doing a moonsault off the announcers area about 15-20 feet to the floor. They do the vignettes to establish that Jack is doing a white boy hip hop gimmick (including the one rolled up sweatpants leg which is a nice piece of detail) while Jack is working some sort of Backstreet Boy thing (which is really more a promotional motif). They actually refer to the goofy D&D like point system for Stamina and Strength in the pre-match analysis (My favorite is Intuition. How in God's name to get a quantifiable number for that?). The match itself was pretty freaking great, the Evans boys were working at a speed that I have rarely seen, doing all kinds of twisty counters and counter-counters as fast as anything I have seen in Lucha Libre. Some of counters included a prawn hold into a flip out wheel barrow suplex with Jack doing a flip and landing on his feet on the ring apron. The biggest spot of the match had Jack doing a leaping spin kick to his brother which sent both guys flying out of the ring to the floor. The end sucked ass, as the matrats.com booking hydra of stink had T.J. Wilson cut the match short by doing a buff blockbusterish diamond cutter thing on Jack to give Jake the win. Match was only about 5 minutes, but was freaking otherworldly when it was going on. I need to see more Evans brothers.

Watching this show, it actually reminded me a lot, conceptually, of All Japan Women. The production looks a lot like Athena with fancy dancy hi-techish intros and a big light show. The crowd is almost completely teenage girls, which is the same demographic that AJW hit big with - although they are using cute teen boys instead of cute teen girls (granted, a lot of the workers do have that pasty Canadian look to them). The work is also very workrate based with lots of big spots and minimal selling just like a lot of the 1995 AJW. Obviously this isn't nearly as good, but some of these guys do look like they have some promise and I will definitely keep checking out the website for matches.

!~!

ARSION Starlet '99
(by Rev. Ray Duffy)

Reggie Bennett vs. La Galatica 2000

Not much of a match, 30 seconds show, Reggie wins with the rotation Powerbomb in 5 minutes.

Emiko Kado vs. Hiromi Yagi

They start out with elbows on each other before Yagi takes it to the mat with Yagi pretty much controlling, but Kado showing that they could hang and at least counter her way out of some trouble. Yagi eventually breaks up the mat work and goes for a top rope splash which misses. Kado gets in some drop kicks, two of which Yagi sort of no sells before getting dropped with the last one. Kado shows some nice counters and a few near falls on Yagi before Yagi scores the win with a back suplex into a float over into a cross armbreaker for the tap out. The finish move by Yagi was pretty cool. It was not an earth shattering match, but Kado looked good for a rookie.

Mari & Fabby Apache vs. Ayako Hamada/AKINO

The Apaches attack early but AKINO and Ayako double armdrag them to the floor and hit a double tope. Ayako controls on Fabby when she is in going through a variety of submission holds but eventually, Mari runs in and helps with some double teams (a double press slam, a double elbow drop and a rolling senton leg drop). Mari does some neat moves, like a rolling La Tapatia and an Indian Deathlock rolled over into a Regal Stretch type move. This match has some rough spots in it as some of the execution seemed off. Mari Apache looked pretty good in this with her stuff looking pretty solid. AKINO did a segment when she was getting hit with near falls and countering the near falls into a cross arm breaker. The Apaches try to get Akino into the Superbomb, but Ayako makes the save, leading to a top rope rana and setting up AKINO hitting a rebound out of the corner Rana that Dragon Kid does for the pinfall.

Yumi Fukawa vs. Rie Tamada

This gets the clipified treatment as Rie gets in a bunch of missile drop kicks including one from the top rope to the floor. About a minute of this 13 minute match is shown and aside from a cradle by Yumi, it's all Tamada.

Mariko Yoshida vs. Michiko Omukai

This also gets slipped up, they start out on the match and are pretty even, they then jump to Omukai

repeatedly kicking Yoshida in the face while she's on the mat. Omukai hits a near fall with a tiger suplex, but when she goes for the BT Bomb, Yoshida takes her to the mat with some submission holds. Yoshida goes for the Air Raid Crash, but gets caught in an abdominal stretch. She escapes it and then runs into a rolling sole butt that looked pretty brutal. Yoshida recovers to hit the Air Raid Crah and then her sleeper with Neck submission for the tap out. Fourteen minutes of a match, maybe five minutes shown. Post match, Omukai throws a tantrum.

Hikari Fukuoka/Mikiko Futagami vs. Candy Okutsu/Aja Kong

Gami takes a beating early on from Aja including a pretty wicked kick to the face and some kicks while on the mat. Aja gets Hikari and challenges her to a test of strength, which Aja wins. Of course, Aja makes this interesting with some smirks and some comedy as she forces Hikari down to the mat and then draws heat for pulling her hair, getting a count from the ref, breaking it briefly by switching which hand is pulling the hair before double stomping Hikari's fingers.

Candy gets the tag in and gets in trouble as both Gami and Hikari work on her bad ankle for a bit before finally tagging out to Aja who again starts pummelling Hikari. Candy really seems to be having problems walking in the match to the point that I don't think it's her selling but more of her making sure she gets to work against her old partner in her retirement countdown rather than sit it out with the injury. Gami hits a cool STO type move to counter an Aja lariat/uraken attempt. Gami knocks both of her opponents to the floor setting up the Hikari moonsault from the post to the floor. Gami hits a dragon suplex for a near fall then tags out to Hikari who hits a top rope drop kick, but fails to hit a tiger driver and when she abandons it and sets up a moonsault, she only eats knees and then a series of back suplexes. Gami saves Hikari from a super Mountain Bomb to set up a rotation drop kick for a two. Hikari hits a moonsault and a back double stomp, but misses her moonsault stomp. Aja hits a brainbuster for a two and tags out to Candy. Candy hits three moonsaults from different angles (one from in ring, one from the apron and then one a turn

around moonsault ala Marc Mero) for a two. Hikari does a no sell at one point and hits the Tiger driver on Candy and then tags out to Gami. Gami hits a bunch of coll stuff including her X-Tornado move and a tilt-a-whirl gut buster to set up a Hikari Moonsault Double Stomp. Gami tries to put away Candy as Aja makes a save but eventually, Gami hits the running Shotay for the pin on Candy. I think the match was really hurt by the fact Candy could hardly work. There was a little bit of goofy selling towards the end, but otherwise it was good.

Post match, there is discussion, setting up Gami v. Hikari. The announcer announces a proposed match time which was more than 5 minutes which Hikari wanted no part of until

everyone corrected him to the 5 minute time limit. They start out on the mat with Gami control for a bit until Hikari escapes a cross arm breaker attempt. Hikari sets up a handspring elbow which Gami counters by catching her and hitting a a german suplex. Gami hits a suplex and basically lets Hikari get up and dares her to hit one which she does. Hikari hits a moonsault and goes back up top, but Gami rolls away from the Moonsault Stomp because she ain't that crazy. Gami hits a moonsault of her own, but misses a second. She hits the rotation kick for a near fall as they spend the last minute with some near falls before the time runs out. After the bell, Hikari pins Gami.

Post match, Sakie Hasegawa comes out and gives Hikari some floors, but then teases an attack as I think it's sort of tradition to haze the person who's retiring. They do some exchanges and Hasegawa hits the uranage on Hikari, Aja comes in the ring, resulting in Hasegawa hitting her with the uranage allowing Hikari to get in the Moonsault stomp. Aja gives her some flowers afterward and a going away headbutt.

After the end of the card, they switch to the next card, inbetween the events, Emiko Kado died in an in ring accident. The next show starts with a memorial for her.

Aja Kong/La Galactica 2000 vs. Mari & Fabby Apache

This gets all a clipified. About 30 seconds shown, Aja and La Galatica hitting stereo La Majistrals and then Mari putting away G2000 with a Michinoku Driver II.

Yumi Fukawa vs. Hiromi Yagi

The dreaded clipifier strikes again. This seemed pretty good back and forth action with both women working for the cross arm breaker for the win and various fighting to get to the ropes. It seemed like this was a good match with action, eventually, Yagi sinks in the jujigatame for the win.

Aja Kong vs. Rie Tamada

Again with the clipping. Tamada works on Aja's knee with drop kicks and stomps. Tamada hits a german suplex which Aja no sells out of but then Tamada hits the Dragon suplex for 2. Eventually Aja no sells, hits the uraken and the brainbuster for the win.

Aja Kong vs. Michiko Omukai

Omukai comes out for the next match and attacks immediately at the bell. This gets all clipified. Aja eventually overcomes Omukai's inital assault and puts her away with an uraken at 5 minutes.

Ai Fujita/Candy Okutsu vs. AKINO/Ayako Hamada

Fujita gets the advantage at the start as Candy yells at Ayako from the apron, suprising her which opens her up to an Ai rana for a near fall. This gets a little bit of clipage with Ayako and AKINO getting heat on Fuyuta for a bunch of the match before taking Ayako to the outside with a headscissors. Ayako and AKINO use some team work to get the advantage and some near

falls on Candy before she eventually tags out to Ai, who takes some drop kicks before Ayako blows a top rope springboard moonsault, allowing Ai to hit a moonsault for a two. Candy does a neat spot where she whips AKINO to a corner and sort of knows she's going to do a run up so rather than chase her to the corner, she runs to the ropes and shakes them so AKINO falls off the top rope. AKINO takes two moonsaults from Candy and then the 450 from Ai allowing Candy and Ai to win. This was ok. Ayako looked sloppy in spots. AKINO continues to impress the hell out of me. I think she's got a lot of ring talent and a lot of personality which means as long as she stays healthy, I think she has a very bright future and potential to be a big name in women's pro wrestling in the future. Post match the CAZAI group do a tribute to Kado.

Mikiko Futagami vs. Mariko Yoshida : Queen of ARSION title match

This starts out with a bunch of counters at the start, with neither woman getting a clear advantage. Yoshida hits a sleeper/chinlock, that Gami suplexes out of but can't break the hold, then she tries another suplex but

Yoshida blocks and they end up in the ropes. Gami tries to turn it into stand up fighting, but Yoshida catches her leg and works on it, turning it into an inverted STF before hitting her sleeper/Neck Submission move which Gami rope breaks out of. Yoshida goes for the Air Raid Crash, but Gami counters with an abdominal stretch, which eventually gets turned into a rolling cradle into a Klingman Toe Hold. This is very much a back and forth fight and fun to watch because each wrestler has a ton of things that they can throw at each other. Yoshida hits the Air Raid Crash for a two and there's a long fight during her sleeper/neck submission move which Gami fights her way out of after being in for a long time. Gami escapes another Air Raid Crash and hits acrippler crossface and then uses a lot of positioning and to keep Yoshida away from the ropes, including switching the hold to something else. Gami scores two near falls with a brainbuster and then a cradle, but can't get the 3. They get a bit goofy when Yoshida no sells a lariat, then Gami no sells an air raid crash then Yoshida no sells a brainbuster before Yoshida locks in a headscissors and armbar variation which eventually makes Gami submit. This was a fun match, though I could have done without the no sell segment at the end.

(*)

EXTREME CANADIAN CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING- Pacific Cup Tourney- 11/2000
(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Mailman brings the domestic indie love and I'm all over it because it has Asian motherfucking Cougar's matches in the True North and also has more of the impressive Tony Kozina who acquitted himself quite well at the Best Super 8 Ever in February. I was trying to find the results for this on the ECCW page and I noticed that these run like EVERY DAY - which is super cool. Indies rule, let's see if the wrestling rules.

Havoc vs. Weed:

Basic indie cruiserweights with Havoc being the more experienced, I'm guessing, since he does the trickier timing stuff. Very indie in execution and stiffness but nothing too repellent. The

ending was kinda tricky with a toprope Hurricanrana is turned into a toprope powerbomb WITH A BRIDGE! Perfectly fine indie wrestling.

Private Todd Kelly vs. Count Monsterod Von Hugenstein:

Private Todd wears camoflage - as one would hope. Count Monsteroid Von Hugenstein MIGHT be Dr Hannibal from that FMW show in 1993 - or maybe he is just wearing the mask. Oh wait, that must be Dr Luther and he's accompanying him to the ring. This wasn't so good. The Count's punches were stinky, stinky, stinky. The Count hits a nice shoulderbreaker though to make up for the Ed Leslie Special Lariat he unleashes on my TV screen. Private Kelly hits a fine La Tapitia. They both cheat to win, but Private Kelly cheats last so he wins. There's a moral in there somewhere for you youngsters.

Chance Beckett vs. Abbadon:

Abbadon has the eye make-up that makes him look like an much much much cooler looking indie Repo Man or the pre-Starchild Paul Stanley, when he was the Love Bandit (my old friend Andrew Beaujon had a KISS Poster with him as the Love Bandit. I FREAKED.) Thank garsh that Abbadon is so facially adorned because they both are about the same size and both are wearing black Dockers. Chance Beckett's selling is all fun and big. They do one transition to offense for Abbadon after screwing up and covering for it pretty well. Abbadon goes for the Silver King/Super Crazy Every Turnbuckle Moonsault but Chance gets his knees for the second rope portion. Abbadon tries for the toprope anyway and Chance gets him with a toprope sunset flip and... IT'S OVER?!?! That was like two minutes. What the fuck?

Asian Cougar vs. Adam Firestorm:

Adam Firestorm is all peppy and jumpy and gets on THE STICK~! to say something about going to high school where they are wrestling or something. They do the basic lucha stalemate sequence and it's just a touch too slow but still effective in getting to the first big spot of the match- the Apron Legdrop by Cougar that Firestorm takes LIKE A MAN. Firestorm gets a string of highspots in starting with the Springboard Cross Bodyblock back into the ring for two followed by the Toprope Headbutt for two. Cougar goes on his final offensive flurry with a Reverse second rope Sunset Flip, followed up by Dropkick to the Face In The Tree Of Woe, and finally the Corner Spinning kick into the Catapult Legdrop from the apron to the ring for three. This was also waaaay too short. Firestorm wasn't really fluid, but he hit his spots really well and was always in position- which was surprising considering how weird Cougar's spots can be and the language barrier and all. Too short.

Nikkie Syxx vs. Disco Fury:

Hoooo-boy! Syxx is kinda big so they do the "I'm stronger than YOU" schtick until they fuck up running the ropes. Disco does a big plancha and they fight a little on the floor. Nikkie Sixx does a toprope axehandle that resembled one of those California beach houses sliding down a cliff into the sea. Syxx hits a nice frog splash and Disco hits the most non-descript splash from the toprope you can hit and still be considered a highspot. A backslide later and thoroughly unmemorable five minute matches draws to a close.

Prince Alladin vs. Tony Kozina:

Prince Alladin has the Most Indie-est Of All Indies Shiny Outfits so he immediately rockets into my heart. He's pretty fucking good as a really tall spot machine. Kozina, who is real damn good, reels him in some and makes it look like a real wrestling match. They do the annoying Nitro thing of making this a match of finishers from the get go and thus this is over in three minutes.

Hiroki Araiwa vs. Brian Bedlam:

Bedlam is doing the lovable redneck gimmick - with Falcons hat and rebel flag t-shirt. Araiwa isn't the old guy from IWA Japan that I thought he was. He's the tall lanky guy who I could never place when he would show up in DDT. They work preposterously loose and I ain't liking it. Bedlam is as indie as a Cueball Carmicheal moonsault - hitting really bad lariats and not looking real sharp on some other stuff- especially a super out-of-control powerbomb that looked verdy Eudy-esque. Araiwa is as indie as an Manhole Man Fluids Auction and he is so not everything you want in Japanese wrestling: working loose, total lack of effective selling and psychology, you know the drill. Araiwa with a chokeslam. Stinky, stinky, stinky! WOO-HOO!

Asian Cougar vs. Chance Beckett:

Chance is on the stick and I can't hear what he is saying but I do notice Cougar has the best mask on the whole of the earth- the black one with all the white canji. Cougar gets on the stick and tells Chance to stick it where the sun don't shine and IT'S ON LIKE NECKBONE! They start off by working the armbar and after a few reversals, Cougar hits the cool ass Floatover Armdrag that I have been in love with since the first time I ever saw Angel Azteca use it- though this is not as elaborate as Angel's. Cougar slows it down with a chinlock and they set up Chance reversing a firemans carry into an armdrag to set up a truly big Silver King Reverse Second Rope Moonsault Plancha. Chance Beckett will bump his ass off - here diving over the toprope onto his head after charging Cougar. Asian Cougar then does the phaaaat ass Diving Senton to the floor that was opposite the stationary camera, but the crowd pops like freaks and Asian Cougar pins the impressive Chance Beckett. This was a good little match.

Disco Fury vs. "Tornado" Tony Kozina:

Disco isn't the smoothest highflyer in the world, but he hangs with Kozina in the actual wrestling portions of this match, working the arm and taking the armdrags really well. Kozina misses a nice Handspring Elbow to set up a lumpy plancha by Disco. His Missile Dropkick was very akin to a King Kong Bundy Tribute to the move. He then hits a horrendous punch and REALLY REALLY REALLY horrendous attempt at a lariat- I look for a couple things in wrestlers in my value judgement of their ability at this point: the ability to throw a punch convincingly/the ability to realize that you can't throw a punch convincingly and the ability to hit a lariat that looks at least as good as Davey Boy Smith at his most bicept protectiness. I'm getting snake eyes on both for Disco in this match... stick to knife edge chops or European uppercuts and try to put some ass behind the lariats. This ain't no fucking Sunday school. They exchange knife edge chops and Kozina brings the stiffness to make the transtion to offense. Once there, he hits a nice Swinging Neckbreaker, a good dropkick and a nice Piscada. Kozina's coolest move is the Toprope Hurricanrana on the opponent on the apron into the ring and Disco pulls it off- thus already making him a better worker than Joe Gomez who completely botched this same spot in

Juventud's second match on Nitro, for those trying to picture this at home. Kozina gets two and Disco gets his first big transition to offense by reversing a toprope flying body press into a powerslam. Kozina gets his knees up when Disco goes for a splash and finishes Disco off with a Swinging DDT. Disco looks inconsistent- especially with his highflying and his stinky punches, but he has hope since it looks like he can wrestle every single day if the ECCW website is any indication. Kozina is really solid and is quite the man to make these look like real wrestling matches, as opposed to the indie spotfests they tend to degenerate into. This wasn't very good, but it was encouraging.

Havoc vs. Private Todd Kelly:

This Havoc guy is kind of nifty. He's really agile, if really green. This match wasn't very smooth - as they kinda fumble around until they run the ropes to hit a spot. Havoc breaks his head trying a split leg moonsault and Kelly hits a nice Northern Lights Suplex with a bridge. Kelly misses a moonsault to set make way for Havoc's La Majistral for the win. Not very long. Very indie in that it hit on some big high-spotty stuff, didn't hit on much to set the highspots up very impressively, it wasn't very stiff, but it wasn't gut-wrenchingly business exposing. Right in the middle of all indiejuniorheavyweight wrestling and is instantly forgettable.

Dr. Luther vs. Johnny Canuck/Michelle Starr/Juggernaut:

Michelle Star throws the best punches of the tape. Dr Luther does some really fun looking fat guy highflying. Michells Starr does really fun looking fat guy highflying. They beat blood-sucking freak Dr Luther with chairs and start carving him up and I await the plasma to blow out of his head but the camera man can't make it to the scene of the crime yet. It's a beautiful ballroom they are wrestling in. The chandeliers, the wallhangings, OH WE'RE BACK! The three guys are still beating on Luther. And they keep beating on him and then Freddy Kreuger and Araika run in and it's quite the trainwreck of rambling crap from here on out. Dr. Luther without blood? WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT... One fat guy- either Johnny Canuck or Juggernaut- turns on Michells Starr and the other fat guy, I think. It wasn't very clear. And this match kinda just keeps going. A nice jumping Powerbomb by Luther and Michelle Starr goes down despite the odds! Michelle Starr does a post-match bladejob.

Tourney Final: Asian Cougar vs. Havoc vs. Kozina:

Okay, so Tony Kozina is the fucking DEAL. I love Asian Cougar but I will never say that he could pull off a match as good as this one - because it really motherfucking rules. It's basically spots spots spots spots but they are put together in the most dynamic way possible. It starts as a three way, though Havoc gets pinned each in the first minute so this is a very vestigial three-way - as Havoc gets a double dropkick in as Kozina and Cougar decide to team up on the youngster. Cougar reverses a corner whip and gets a La Majistral out of single leg takedown as the double cover eliminates young Havoc. Cougar starts out of the armbar and they shift to quick lucha nearfalls and the crowd is warming up. Cougar works out of a chinlock to set up his Corner Whip double leg lariat into the Catapult Legdrop. Asian Cougar then hits his Apron Legdrop as Kozina does the little detail of tangling his leg in the middle rope to make more sense of the spot. Cougar MURDERLIZES Tornado Tony with Over The Toprope Diving Senton onto Kozina coated with chairs. Another legdrop and Cougar gets two. Tony ducks the Double

Corner Leg Lariat and goes on offense with a Second rope reverse Dropkick to set up a fucking BEAUTIFUL Asai Moonsault. He hits Cougar with a really great Flying Cross-Body Block for two. Springboard Elbow sets up his toprope Bulldog and Cougar is reeling. Double Flying headbutts and it's a HEAT SEGMENT~! until they hit their feet. Cougar dropkicks him to the floor and hits a diving Senton onto a STANDING Kozina and pretty much breaks his own neck for their Canadian Veiwing Pleasure. Missile Dropkick for two and Asian Cougar has pretty much depleted his arsenal. Kozina catches him at the toprope and hits a Rana for two off the top. Asian Cougar reverses out of a German Suplex attempt and hits a German of his own WITH A BRIDGE for the win. This match is all about why I love Asian Cougar and why I'm really beginning to dig what little I've seen of Tony Kozina. Cougar has been in matches as spectacular as these in Japan, but only Kozina has ever supplied this much glue to a match. Really fucking good.

Overall, you REALLY want the final, the rest won't get you as excited, though there are a few guys who make the 500. Only a couple matches out and out sucked it. Most matches were waay too short to get a good feel for what kind of workers these are which I found pretty annoying. Final is fucking good. Asian Cooger rules it. Kozina RULES it.

'Gancarski's Guide to the WCW/NWO SUPER STICKER ACTIVITY BOOK'

[Modern Publishing, 1999, ISBN 0766604454]

(by Tony Gancarski)

This 1999 book can be found on the remainder table at any Barnes and Noble near you, a surface which undoubtedly will be the home to other books about wrestling in the upcoming months as the buzz about wrestling [as it was] dies on the very lips of the casual fan and the facile media. The book is logically structured like any coloring book from one's youth; the reader is called upon to color or to trace a character outline. As one leafs through this book, however, he comes to understand why this company collapsed as inexorably as a punctured lung.

The first two pages in the book are a premonitive clearinghouse of bad drawing and worse writing. Page 1 alleges that 'Hollywood Hogan gets the crowd going before his match'; the next page that 'Scott Hall tries to get Sting in the ring'. What's interesting about this as my first impression of the book is that both men look incredibly similar; roided-out physiques, 'evil' beard growth, sunglasses, and bulging cocks. Both pictures feature crowds whipped into veritable frenzies, with many signs held aloft pimping the name of the worker on the page.

The problem with this, of course, is that the crowd is going crazy for heels here, establishing any number of messages that contradict wrestling's traditional morality play function. In WCW, crime pays. Villany is rewarded. The end justifies the means, and it's all good if you run out on your wife or your kids, because suck it 3:16 for life DDP mastercard slim jim brother.

The book grinds on. 'Booker T loves to show his opponents the Harlem Sidekick', reads a caption. Booker T, usually one of the most effortlessly cool looking people in the business, is reduced to caricature by this sketch, which bugs out his eyes and puffs out his lips out of proportion with how he really looks, all the while imbuing his gaze with an almost skittish uncertainty. Bugeyed Booker is divested of the Raybanned cool of the fortysomethings in the NWO gear; thus he is exposed, and found wanting, like so many workers who gave so many good matches before the stars walked that aisle and the ring filled with debris.

Still in the front of the book, the reader is treated to a two page spread. 'Hogan and Hall are more than ready [emphasis added] to take on the Macho Man and the Dog-Faced Gremlin.' Of course they are. Because God knows they were so over that they needed to be featured on 4 of the first 10 pages of the book. With that in mind, it can't be surprising that on the very next page, we get an exciting pic of Hogan and Savage getting ready to square-off in the center of the ring.

Finally, soon thereafter, we get our first representation of Raven, the current Sunday Night Heat and WWF Metal mainstay. He's not drawn of course; better to just render him as a featureless lump and invite the reader to fill in details, as this book does. Even the caption pussifies him: 'Raven takes some quiet time in the locker room before his next match.'

Is that great or what? We don't get 'Scott Steiner scams a clean needle before his next match', or 'Buff calls a staffer a coon before his next match', or 'Hogan works an enema on Eazy-E before their next played-out promo.' It goes without saying that the book also manages to depict contemplation as a chump's act in this picture. A perfect companion piece to the 'quiet time' is the page on which "Raven rushes to the ring to wrestle in the first match of the night." Dig that glass ceiling.

The book depicts the midcarders as the chumps they were in WCW. Malenko gets two pages, both of which feature him working camel clutch type moves for whatever reason. We get Booker T and Konnan getting ready for their "big match". There's a surreal picture of Ric Flair with anchorman hair and a torso akin to that of his AWA action figure, holding up a flag with only '4H' on it. A shot of the Horsemen in tuxedos -- or so the book says -- in which Benoit looks like Barry Horowitz, and in which the other '3H' were drawn just as ineptly.

Of course, it goes without saying that they were never once drawn near the world title, and that's what ultimately made me write about this book. This company that managed to push the laziest workers the hardest and to reward effort and artistry with cups of coffee thrown into workers' faces, with depushes and format changes that took away what little TV time they had, was actually very upfront about how they booked. After working through the Super Sticker Activity Book, even a child could figure that out.

NEW JAPAN PPV 2/18/2001
(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

WARNING WARNING WARNING: GREETINGS! THIS IS A REALTIME REVIEW! EXPECT FABULOUS MISPELLINGS! I LOVE IT! YOU LOVE IT! YOU LOVE IT! LOVE IT!

This music is super fine as we they camera jumps around the auditorium here in Japan City, Japan. The announcer looks like TV's Frank's brother with an od of sun-in. Usually, you can use this time in the beginning to write fabulous jokes about the matches but I have no matchlist because Mailman, who sent me this, doesn't have this on his site yet. Katsumi at Japan Wrestling Shop sent me a DDT tape just for kicks and I might review that too, depending on how painful this PPV is. There are only so Manabu Nakanishi jokes you can make before you hit the wall. OOP! Here we go. It's 8:10. The fear is gone...

EL SAMURAI/Dr. WAGNER/SILVER MOTHERFUCKING KING vs. TAKAIWA/KOJI
KANEMOTO/MINORU TANAKA:

Silver king is wearing the SWANK Aztec battle vest. The Wagner brothers are wearing big pants which I find disconcerting for some reason- as seeing them in full singlets is weird and shocking to my lucha sensibilities. El Samurai is wearing the dogbone mask that you love. Kohji's coiffe is all puffy and alluring. They ge4ar up to unleash Doc onto Takaiawa- who I haven't actually watched wrestle in like two years. Clean break as I wonder if Doc has turned all pansy-assed on me. Takaiwa and Doc do some slappin' and choppin' and Silver king comes in and Minoru and Koji kick him. Minoru Tanaka and Silver motherfucking King are in the ring together and it IS GOLD. Silver king is versatile enough to take the kicks and work the shootstyle and Minoru is Michinoku Pro enough to work the lucha. Sammy takes a knee drop right to the face and Koji starts kicking the fuck out of him, busting him up with a BEAUTIFUL jumping Falcon Arrow. Koji and Silver King is less beautiful as they blow the double dropkick spot. Takaiwa and El Samurai (OOP! Rippa on the phone. REALTIME IS ON HOLD....) Annnd we're back! The Wagner bros look on- looking so cool and regal as a real luchadore will look while standing on the apron. Kohji hits the FATTEST knee to the face in the world on Sammy and Sammy takes it like it's the TOSJ 97- there is magic between Sammy and Koji, a special magic. The Wagners do the Super great five runs of the rope and a tumble dropkick Camel clutch spot INTO a La Tapitia with a garnish of Sammy and the King bringing down the double axe handles. Sammy makes with dropkicks to the face and Takaiwa hits another lariat. Sammy reverses a Powerbomb into a DDT but Takaiwa gets out of the way of Sammy diving headbutt to make the tag. Minoru comes in and does that coolass Missed Spinkick to his feet to set up a Rolling Kneebar. Sammy does forty three things to hit a Scorpiopn Deathdrop to allow Silver King and Minoru TO JUST MOTHERFUCKING RIP IT UP. King starts with the double rope Springboard Moonsault and THEN it becomes this super fucked up contest of who can do the weirdest roll-up vs submission- as King goes straight high-grade tricked out lucha matwork as Minoru counters with his own mutant Lucha-cum-Shootstyle that he perfected in BattlARTS. King starts with a Dos Caras Armbar Around the Back Combo Headscissors Into a Roll-up. Minoru counters with a kick to the chest and Spin Around the Shoulders Into A Cross-Armbreaker until Sammy makes

the save. Doc and Koji go all high impact, with Koji hitting a running Belly -to Belly into a Piscada as Sammy CRUSHES Minoru with a tope and King hits the springboard Plancha on Takaiawa. Koji does the cool ass counter out of the Wagner Driver by slipping down into a Kneebar until Doc makes the rope. Doc no-sells a Senton and hits a gnarly DDT. A Plancha for two and Powerbomb for two that leads to Sammy hitting a toprope Scorpion Death Drop. SilverKing hits the triple Moonsault. doc Wagner PLUNGES down the DVDVR 500 by no-selling a Death Valley Bomb AND a Missile Dropkick. He does succumb to a Falcon Arrow and Kanemoto moonsault. Great Spotfest, shitty no-selling by Doc, the Minoru vs SilverKing stuff was motherfucking GOLD.

Michiyoshi Ohara/Tatsusoshi Goto vs. Brian Johnson/ SledgeHAMMER?!?!)

I asked Ripa he said it was SLEDGEHAMMER. He's looking at the list and everything : Jesus, for this I'm missing reruns of MARRIED WITH CHILDREN? Johnson and Ohara take it to the mat and then they start slapping each other. Johnson hits a nice dropkick and feigns spitting. Sledgehammer looks like Ned Beatty's bastard wrestling son. He and Goto start a knucklelock that the Sledgehammer loses! Ohara...Goto...Sledgehammer.... Ohara...goto...Sledgehammer... Goto.... Sledgehammer... Goto....Ohara.... Sledgehammer.... Oh sorry, kinda fell into a shitty wrestling trance. GOTO AND SLEDGEHAMMER TAKE IT TO THE MOTHERFUCKING MAT! AWWWWW YEAH! JOHNSON AND GOTO TAKE IT TO THE MAT! OH FUCK YEAH, BUDDY! Johnson isn't actually isn't bad at all when in with these guys. I dig the attempt. they do some wrestling around the ring. Sledgehammer taps to Ohara. New Japan will stick any shit on a PPV- I await a Miss New Japan contest.

Osamu Nishimura/Jyushin Thunder Lyger vs. Shiro Koshinaka/Yutaka Yoshie:

HEEEY! Yoshie got rid of the Skull Starfish. He's off the list because now he has no redeeming value. And we get to finally see who look more like Sam Waterston. Lyger takes ASS TO THE FACE by Kosh. Lyger hits a motherfucking spear. WHAT THE FUCK IS UP WITH ALL THE MOTHERFUCKING SPEARS? Yoshie sucks. succckkkks.....suckkkkkss...suuuuuuuuuuuckssssss.... suuuuuuucks... suuuuuuuuuuucks.... Nishimura wrestles for both he and Yoshie and the midget that Yoshiue has hiding in his singlet. Lyger can't bodyslam his fat ass and when all the steroids in Japan that Lyger has ingested can't get your fat ass off the ground, it's time for Deal-A-Meal, Shamu. Nishimura takes an ASS TO THE FACE~! Nishimura punches Kosh in the face- knowing that if he keeps punching in the face he will always know where Koshianaka's ass is. Lyger decides to hit Kosh with an ASS TO THE FACE~! He sez, "PUT YOUR LIPS WHERE THE STEROIDS GO IN, OLD MAAAAN!" Yoshie tries to look intense while procuring some kind kneebar. Kosh, being an ACTUAL wresltler, starts breaking Lygers leg across the ropes. Lyger, being an ACTUAL wrestler, sells the knee. Yoshie does the most listless Half Crab in the history of Crustacean Based Submission Holds. Kosh, being an ACTUAL wrestler breaks Lyger's leg over the apron. Yoshie does a Tenta-level Corner splash and hits his DEADLY shitty reverse Figure Four. Lyger is tougher than Tenzan so he makes it to the ropes. I can only wonder where Nishimura is. Kosh sez, "HAVE ANOTHER BIG OLE BATCH OF MYYYY ASSS!!!" as he cascades off the toprope hitting Lyger with the whole fruitbowl. Lyger gets in a shotay, Nishimura appears in the match again after 53 minutes and hits a dropkick. And anothe dropkick and a Missile Dropkick and hits

Yoshie with a dropkick. Yoshie is astoundingly ass-sucking as he does the sloppiest power slam and the sloppiest legdrop. Nishimura gets a Sleeper and then gets an Octopus Hold but the motherfucker doesn't submit. THEY KEEP WRESTLING. Yoshie and Lyger fight for the Brainbuster as Lyger reaches DEEP into his body's Ico-Pro supply and HITS THE BRAINBUSTER!! You get to see the whole groinular region of Yoshie. Nishimura hits a nice German but Yoshie REFUSES TO GET THE FUCK OFF MY TV. He does hit a truly hilarious kinda like a Lou Thesz press which looked more like Ted Kennedy diving for a bottle of Scotch which followed Nishimura with a SWANK German WITH A BRIDGE! It kinda degenerates into Yoshie kinda making shit up. AND YOSHIE BEATS NISHIMURA WITH THE REVERSE FIGURE FOUR. Yoshie is the worst bloated sack of shit in wrestling today. I'm glad he's being pushed by the shit-for-brains called Chosyu.

(RIPPA CALLS AND GIVES THE REST OF THE MATCHLIST! WOO-HOO!)

Manabu Nakanishi vs. Super J:

Nakanishi has the hair in this match that makes him look like Donna's father in THAT 70s SHOW. he's also coming to the ring in one of baseball jersey t-shirts that we would show our love for Van Halen with in the late 70s. Super J is still having no trouble getting his steroid needs met. Super J makes with the headlock as we get to see if the Good heavyweight can carry the Feculent heavyweight to ANYTHING watchable. NOPE so far as they do a horrendous shoulderblock sequence. The knucklelock sequence starts well- as it seems that Super J wants to try to keep the unstoppable Whirlwind of Suck that IS Manabu Nakanishi from thoroughly shitting all over the ring immediately from the bell. Super J gets him in a chinlock and Manabu powers and and they start elbowing each other. Super J kicks him in the stomach, hits a nice corner lariat and gets some that Heel Heat before hitting a vertical suplex. I really like Super J and he is containing Manabu better most anyone else I've ever seen Manapoo in with. Manabu with a bodyslam and legdrop and then he works on the hamstring and starts headbutting the knee of Super J. He then does that Malenko/ Toshie Yamada Leg Breaker thing. Super J hits a lowblow for TRANSITION~! and starts kicking Manabu. Manabu is limber and he actually gets hit in the face with his own knee when Super J yanks on it. Super J gets a kneebar and Manabu actually gets points with me by selling it like he is fixin' to cry. Super j kicks knee some and Manabu reverse a Lariat attempt into his Fallaway Slam thing but actually sells the knee well when he can't get Super J up for the Argentine Backbreaker. Super J with a NICE toprope lariat. The BIG KNEE but no WIGGLY ARMS YET! Super J trumps him with his own SPEAR! Manbu procures the IRONCLAW! The ARMS GET WIGGLY! The Argentine Backbreaker is procured. Okay, Nakanishi is becoming a guilty pleasure. Super J is going up the DVDVR 500. He is good good good. His powerstuff is dynamic, he puts matches together well, he sells well for a NJ Heavyweight. THE FINEST STING OF ALL!

Yuji Nagata/Iizuka vs. Masahito Kakihara/Mitsuya Nagai:

Nagai and Kakihara are Team Strongs! Iizuka and Nagata are the best male tagteam in the world currently. Kakihara has these really long pants to further baffle me pantswise AS THIS PPV CHALLENGES MY PRE-CONCEIVED NOTIONS ABOUT PANTSWEAR! It also has really long words written in Japanese up the side- possible "Ass, Gas, or grass- noone rides for free..."

but I don't read Japanese. Iizuka- whose resurgence is SOOO beyond wild- and Kakehara start it off by going to the mat. HEY! Yamazaki is color commentating. I think he said something about the "puppies" in the front row. Kakehara is working for a kneebar but Iizuka has his wrist and is working for a Cross ArmBreaker. Back to a vertical base, Nagata comes and they start beating the fuck out of each other and I'm in love all over again with the coolest thing in the world- the professional wrestling. Nagai comes in and GOLLY! He'll kick ya right in the motherfucking face. Yuji gets him in a kneebar. Nagai reverses it. Yuji gets to his feet and makes the tag so Iizuka can get the cool ass Old School Toe Hold that Nagai reverses into an ankle pick. Kakehara comes and goes buck wild with the kicks to the hamstring to set up a Rear Naked Choke. Nagai comes in and just starts kicking the holy LIVING FUCK out of Iizuka- who gets out of it by getting Nagai into a Fujiwara armbar that he turns into a full Cross Armbreaker. Nagata comes in and doesn't get enough hops on the German and almost paralyzes the former RINGS guy Nagai. Nagata and Kakehara start beating the living fucking breathing hell out of each other with Nagata hitting the SUPER dickhead knees to the face. Kakehara thanks God for Iizuka and his gentle loving Exploider Suplex since he has forgotten all the lyrics to Appetite For Destruction after Nagata's foray into beating the holy living dogshit out of him. Iizuka and Nagai take it to the mat, with Iizuka procuring a tenacious Chokehold that he transforms into a sleeper. Nagai and Nagata start trading kicks after Iizuka tags out and Kakehara and Nagata start slapping each other until Nagata hits a FAT ASS Released German. Kakehara recovers with a Rolling kneebar and it goes completely kicktastic until Kakehara sinks in the Nagata Lock with dickish Nagata salute thrown in for good measure. Nagai tags in and Nagata and Nagai kick the holy breathing living fucking catpiss out of each other and YOU! you the reader are in total violent, hateful bliss. Nagata is a MACHINE by this point kicking here, Suplexing there, applying the Nagata Lock to Nagai as a thousand flashes respond to his salute. Iizuka is tagged in and he makes with the stiff elbows to set up his Capture Suplex to set up another Sleeper hold that Nagai turns into a Buzzkiller. Iizuka makes the ropes but Nagai hits a German for two and then starts pummeling Iizuka like only Nagai can pummel. Iizuka snags Nagai's leg finally and goes from an Ankle pick into a Sleeper for the tap out. I love these two tagteams and I loved this match. Stiff as all fuck. Manly as all hell. The love, the beatings, the submissions, the coolness, the TRUE GRIT. Oh yeah, I wanna rematch already. Put the belt on BOTH of these teams already.

Kojima/Tenzan vs. Chosyu/Makabe:

I thought Riki retired? AHAHAHAHHA. I really love Kojima and Tenzan as a tagteam and they are both on a resurgence as of late, as New Japan is revitalized by all this cross-promotional stuff. I'm starting to dig Makabe as he has developed into a decent wrestler as of late. Chosyu starts by choking Tenzan in the corner and berating him. Maybe this is a SHOOTANGLE~! or not. Who gives a fuck? Let's get the wrestling started already. Chosyu kinda slaps Tenzan around for the first couple minutes. Tenzan goes low, Makabe hits a SPEAR!!! and we're back to HEY! a Chosyu Lariat. Riki is working for a Scorpion Deathlock. Makabe with ANOTHER SPEAR as Kojima tries to make the save. Chosyu lariats Kojima and this match is REALLY start to suck ass for the team of Tenzan and Kojima as it looks like the booker is trying to teach them a lesson- HEY! That's the story of the match! Luckily, it turns out to be a lot cooler than just that- as Tenzan no-sells Makabe's offense before hitting a nice Spin kick and it's Tony Atlas

Time! Kojima and Makabe start trading punches and it lasts a real long time. Makabe hits a nice Locomotion German for two. Kojima ducks a cornercharge and hits a nice Belly-To-Back. Kojima starts chopping the poop out of Makabe until Makabe hits ANOTHER SPEAR! and makes the hot tag to Chosyu, who is still pissed about something. He punches Kojima in the head and slams his forehead into the uncovered turnbuckle. I'm thinking that maaaaybe.. nope, bloodless. Tenzan and Kojima start beating on Makabe for a while and Kojima locks in the Scorpion for a second, as he seems to hate Chosyu and wants to piss him off even more. It becomes a heat segment as they beat on Makabe at great length to hurt Riki. Finally, Riki tags in and Kojima catches him with a Diamond Cutter and a big Lariat. Tenzan comes in to exact his revenge. Kojima pounds on Riki until Riki hits a very gnarley Dangerous Backdrop. Kojima recovers and hits another Lariat and applies the Figure Four despite Makabe really pounding on Kojima's head. Tenzan does the BEAUTIFUL thing and stomps on Riki's face while he's in the Figure four and also does the TRULY dicklike Toprope Diving headbutt on Chosyu while Riki is still in the Figure Four. Makabe makes the save but Kojima JUST RIPS HIS MOTHERFUCKING HEAD OFF WITH A LARIAT- I MEAN HE RIPS HIS MOTHERFUCKING HEAD OFF WITH A LARIAT- and Makabe is done for a while. Tenzan and Kojima continue to beat the hell out of Grampa Chosyu and the already dead Makabe. Tenzan gets the pin with a Moonsault on Chosyu and GOLLY! this was a whole lot better than I thought it would be. The Chosyu hates Tenzan story spills over to Chosyu hate Kojima and the whole sacrifice of the game Makabe and vicious dissection of the suddenly alone Chosyu made for a good story and the execution was pretty stiff and vicious in spots. I dug this. You would too. Makabe sells like he dead from the lariat- as my fondness for him grows despite the endless array of spears. Kojima and Tenzan are a fabulous tagteam. Maybe they will pan out after all.

[Antonio Inoki is dressed like ONRYO and talks on the STICK~! for a while. I get to add stuff to the somehow BOSS Tenzan/ Kojima vs Makabe/ Chosyu match. Inoki swings a stick and his dream of being Big Josh gets one step closer to fruition.]

Don Frye vs. Chono:

Masahiro Chono looks supercool walking to the ring. He has the Aristist TEAM 2000 towel like the coolest possible Ronnie Garvin. I missed the whole story as to why he is wrestling Don Frye. Frye has the leatherpants and the Rick Rude moustache and they are talking smack from the moment they enter the ring. Frye whips out the Bearhug. But, luckily, he turns it into a nice suplex before I could get the Hercules Hernandez joke out. Frye then punches Chono right in the face a bunch. Frye then beats up Team 2000. Frye is trying to break Chono's ribs by punching him over and over. Chono just takes a beating as Frye keeps kneeing him in the ribs. ribs ribs ribs ribs. Finally Mr Balckjack rocks Frye's testicals like a hurricane and we get a Chono flurry. Chono throws Frye into Team 200 and they stomp him down for a while. Frye throws really great punches and punches back to offense and sinks in a Camel Clutch before going back to punching the poop out of Chono's ribs. The pinnacle of the match is Frye getting Chono in another Bearhug and Chono getting out of it by trying to rip Frye's nose off. Chono stomps him for a while and the brawling begins. Frye punches back to offense. Chono takes him down and applies the STF and the match kinda goes into the Chono Pinning Ritual- the Yakuza kicks, etc. Oh wait! Frye drags him out to the floor and punches him in face and it's suddenly kinda

neat. Frye then starts punching Team 2000 in the face all over again. Frye back to punching the ribs. Chono with a right cross for a two count. Frye quickly gets a Rear Naked Choke. A Belly to Belly after Chono makes the ropes and Frye reapplies it and puts Chono out. Postmatch he starts pounding on the unconscious Chono until team 200 makes the save. the problem with this match is that a.) Chono is REALLY immobile, b.) Frye's offence is so limited in this because of (a) and c) it can't compare to the thorough ass-beating of the Nagata/Iizuka vs Team Stongs match. This was perfectly fine for what it was I guess, but we are reaching the end of Chono being able to cover for his limited physical ability by craft and psychology and guile, which is sad.

Keiji Mutoh vs. Murakami:

Murakami RULES. Mutoh looks like G Gordon Liddy now! This match sucked. Murakami looks evil as ever coming to the ring- a sort of Prince Namor with more expressive eyebrows. Mutoh is accompanied by Don Frye (ah that's right. The Chono match is clear to me now.) and Tea Kieoh. Murakami starts off by punching Mutoh in the face and kicking him a whole bunch until Mutoh hits the floor. Mutoh comes back in and takes Murakami to the mat and.... does NOTHING. A guy in a white mask comes to ringside and it's OMINOUS. Murakami kicks Mutoh to the mat and Mutoh does.... NOTHING. Mutoh gets in a legwhip and tries for a Figure Four but Murakami reverses it into a choke. The guy in the white mask jumps on the apron and Murakami goes after him. Mutoh dropkicks Murakami's knee and does two knees to Murakami's face and gets the pin. BOY! THIS REALLY SUCKED DICK. I was waiting for Mutoh to win with a Schoolboy but it wasn't even that good. Possibly the shittiest match I have ever seen to have the name New Japan attached to it. I would like to welcome back the Worthless Mutoh. Kneeless or not, this is inexcusable. Chono is THOROUGHLY crippled and he would have had a ten thousand times better match- just because he actually gives a shit his fucking craft. Fuck Mutoh. Go retire already, you worthless sack of shit.

The white mask guy was Shinzaki it is revealed.

Kensuke Sasaki vs. Shinjiro Ohtani:

Ohtani has red hair now and he is up for a title shot? on PPV? I dunno. We'll see. Sasaki is wrestling at the highest level of his career as a singles wrestler as of late so who knows. Ohtani flies out the blocks kicking Sasaki in the head before he can ever get the belt off. Shinjiro starts working Kensuke's arm, tenaciously kicking it and wrenching it over the middle rope. Shinjiro switches to a couple armbar variations and then takes it back into the corner to work on the arm more. Kensuke finally gets in a knee to the stomach and starts kicking Shinjiro in the corner, but sells the arm so he can't hit a Lariat. Shinjiro ducks three lariat attempts and gets back on the offense of relentlessly working on Sasaki's lariat arm, going so far as to hit a beautiful Springboard Dropkick onto his arm. Shinjiro sinks in the Cross Armbreaker doesn't let go at the ropes. Sasaki smacks Ohtani in the head with his good arm and starts kneeing Ohtani because his arm is crushed. Sasaki hits a high Vertical Suplex but his arsenal is so limited by the ruined right arm that he can't even get a clean cover. Ohtani hits a spin kick and starts pumphandling Sasaki's arm and throws him back into the corner for more work on the arm. Kensuke Sasaki powers out of the corner and runs across the ring and hits a picture perfect dropkick right on Ohtani's chin. he then hits a Powerslam. He tries for a Lariat but Ohtani dropkicks his arm

Overall, get someone to tape the good matches for you. The rest is HIDEOUS.
12:27- night-night.

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!There's no turning back now- I'm under attack now- I see the skies are open
And I hear the word spoken- SINGLES GOING STEADY You only perceive
what you believe- You need only believe to believe- What do you know?- What do you know?
+++++

World's Greatest (or Goofiest) Battle Royal - WCW Pro - Sometime in 1995 (Rippa)

This was on the Pro, which means that none of you have seen it. On that Syndie level food chain, it was always - Sat Night, Worldwide, Main Event, Pro. WCW always used to bust out the battle royals on the syndicated shows to hype the turd that was World War 3. Because if you like hot 10 man action, wait for 60 man action. Honestly, they should have been using this idea more during their 215 person roster days. They had the random lucha battle royal. They could have done the Power Plant Battle Royal, the European Battle Royal, the third tier tag team Battle Royal, the friends of Hulk Hogan Battle Royal, the discrimination law suit Battle Royal, etc. This one is populated by the following: Dave Sullivan, Fidel Sierra, Ricky Santana, Nasty Ned, Disco Inferno, Cobra, Mark Starr, Frankie Lancaster, the State Patrol (Buddy Lee Parker, James Earl). Place your bets now on who wins this. Here is a hint - Disco is doing the whole run from any contact and protects his hair. I had no recollection of Nasty Ned but Dean remembered his receding hair line. The Thumper Frankie Lancaster is the first one dumped which was fairly obvious because it was either going to be him or Mark Starr. (Well, look at this logically - Disco

was getting the push. Dave Sullivan and Cobra were the "name". The State Patrol and the Barrio Brothers were tag teams which meant they got to hang around long enough to eliminate someone. Nasty Ned was the "tall guy" who was going to have the advantage over everyone. That left Lancaster and Starr.) The State Patrol get the big push as they are Disco's enforcers, dumping people left and right (somewhere in the ball park of dumping half the field) and protecting Disco from elimination. Parker and Earl turn on Disco and then turn on each other, which means that Disco dumps them both and gets the win. God, what was Disco doing back then to deserve the early push? I guess it was better than letting Sullivan and his pet rabbit get the win.

Maverick Wilde vs. Anarachist Doug Williams - New England Championship Wrestling (9/16/00)
(Rippa)

Dan had hooked me up with two NECW shows and since he reviewed the other one in the now defunct? disbanned? disbarred? dismembered? Sambo Review, I agreed that I would review the 9/16 show. Well after the midget match - a midget match with a ref bump - and the fat guys who looked like they were stepped straight off the motorcycles and the pages of the Guinness Book of World's Records, I said FUCK IT and I am just reviewing the match I cared about. (Thought Jason Knight wasn't afraid to be the best working Buff Bagwell around.) Welcome to America, Mr. Williams. I see that you have had no problems "working on your upper body." Despite looking huge now - Williams looks MOTHERFUCKING great in this match as he brings all the British non-gay matwork and leads Maverick Wilde by the head to a very good match. Williams is not afraid to break out the greatest reversals into leg locks but I really dug his German Suplex WITH A BRIDGE out of a roll-up attempt. The most improved area of Williams' game is his selling as he sells the leg that Wilde had been working on constantly - including selling it while running the ropes which is a HUGE plus. Fuck, Dougie also does a great sell of a head scissors and he gives the illusion that his skull might be popped off like the head of a dandelion. Wilde impressed me in some spurts (like this funky facebuster out of an armdrag) but he looked awfully inexperienced at times - the worst crimes being that he manages to land on his own head TWICE including once blowing a backflip out of a backdrop. And whoever taught him that the Rolling Thunder headbutt to the groin spot was a good idea needs to be shot (I am assuming that Killer Kolwoski didn't teach him that move.) Wilde gets what I guess could be considered the upset win but considering that I doubt that many in the crowd had any idea of the background of Williams, it just came off as the young guy with tiny green pants won.

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

NEXT TIME: WHO THE FUCK KNOWS! WE ARE ALL ABOUT THE 500 RIGHT NOW!

THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS.

Seven fists in the face of wrestling

^^*^*^*^*^*^*^*^*